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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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THE BATTLE AFTER THE BALLOT

Vijay scrambles to secure alliances; Stalin resigns

Vijayan gives up security; Rangasamy set for 5th term

CHENNAI/T'PURAM/ PUDUCHERRY, 5 MAY

A day after a surprise mandate upended Tamil Nadu politics, Tuesday saw a scramble for numbers and alliances. In a nailbiter post-poll scenario, both AIADMK and Congress showed their openness to joining hands with TVK. While government formation remains uncertain in Tamil Nadu, Kerala witnessed a quiet transfer of power after a decisive verdict. Puducherry delivered a clear mandate for NDA with N Rangasamy coming back for a second term.

TAMIL NADU: VIJAY SEEKS MAJORITY

Actor-turned-politician Vijay stepped up efforts to form the government, formally staking claim and seeking support to bridge the gap to a majority. TVK MLAs have been moved to a resort in Mamallapuram to "keep the flock together" and prevent potential poaching or horse-trading by rivals.

His Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), with 108 seats, is short of 10 seats for the halfway mark in the 234-member Assembly. Vijay has written to Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, requesting a chance to prove majority, with 7 May likely for the swearing-in. Congress, which won five seats, has become pivotal. Senior leaders, including Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, held consultations in New Delhi after Vijay sought support. The party has asked its Tamil Nadu unit to take a final call, stressing that the mandate favours a "secular government" and ruling out support to BJP or its allies, which means they will likely leave the DMK-led bloc.

Within the DMK-led bloc, CPI and CPI(M) have two seats each, while IUML and VCK have two each, and DMDK one.

AIADMK, with 47 seats, has indicated openness to post-poll arrangements, even as internal signals remain mixed. Lottery baron Santiago Martin's wife, Leema Rose Martin, an AIADMK MLA, said discussions were in progress between Vijay's camp and former chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami. The AIADMK-led NDA includes PMK (4), BJP (1) and AMMK (1). TVK needs the backing of at least 12 MLAs.

Outgoing Chief Minister MK Stalin resigned after the DMK was reduced to 59 seats, saying it will stay in the Opposition.

If the TVK secures support exceeding 118 seats, the Governor is expected to invite it to form the government. Failing that, it may be asked to prove its majority on the Assembly floor. If TVK is unable to garner backing, the Governor could invite DMK, the second-largest party, to form the government. Should that effort also fail, Tamil Nadu could come under Governor's rule for six months.

KERALA: LOW-KEY EXIT FOR VIJAYAN

Outgoing Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan maintained a restrained public presence, arriving in Thiruvananthapuram without his usual security convoy and travelling in a private vehicle to Cliff House. The scaled-down movement, with minimal escort, underscored a subdued transition after the Left's heavy defeat. Congress leaders in the state have begun internal discussions on government formation within the UDF, which is expected to take charge shortly, marking a significant political shift after consecutive LDF terms.

P'CHERRY: RANGASAMY SET FOR FIFTH TERM

N Rangasamy is set to return as Chief Minister for a fifth time, with the AINRC-led NDA securing a majority. The AINRC won 12 of 16 seats contested, while BJP secured four seats. Allies AIADMK and LJK won one seat each, taking the alliance tally to 18 in the 30-member Assembly, above the majority mark of 16.

Rangasamy, who began his career in the Congress and served as chief minister in 2001 and 2006, floated the AINRC in 2011 after differences with the party and later aligned with the NDA in 2014. —*PTI*

7 women in Assam assembly
>>>Read on Pgs 3,4

QUOTE of THE DAY

> The President (Donald Trump) congratulates Prime Minister Modi on this (Bengal's), historic and decisive election victory
>
> —**KUSH DESAI,** White House spokesman

Wreckage is seen at a TMC office following violence after the West Bengal election results on Tuesday—*PTI*

Defiant Didi refuses to quit, says BJP 'looted' 100 seats

KOLKATA, 5 MAY

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday refused to resign despite her TMC suffering a crushing defeat in the Assembly elections, branding the verdict "not a people's mandate but a conspiracy". Meanwhile, BJP said that it will take oath on on 9 May, coinciding with Rabindranath Tagore's birthday.

A day after BJP stormed to power with 207 seats in the 294-member House, ending TMC's 15-year rule, the TMC was decimated to just 80 seats. Banerjee dismissed the outcome as "engineered", alleging large-scale irregularities in counting and claiming nearly 100 seats were "looted". "We were not fighting the BJP, but the Election Commission," she declared, further accusing central forces of "manhandling" her at a counting centre. Her refusal to step down has plunged the

state into a constitutional grey area, with no precedent for a defeated chief minister declining to resign. Experts, said Matata has no choice but to quit. Former Lok Sabha secretary general PDT Achary insisted she "has to go" once a new chief minister is sworn in, as the outgoing Assembly's term ends on 7 May. Senior advocate noted the Governor can dismiss her if she does not resign.

DIDI UNDER 'LOCKDOWN'

In an unprecedented move, security restrictions were imposed around Banerjee's Kalighat residence and the state secretariat Nabanna, per Election Commission directives. Central paramilitary forces were stationed outside Nabanna and TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee's home even before results were declared. Chief Secretary Dushyant Nariala directed departments to ensure no official documents leave the secretariat, though experts deemed this unconstitutional, citing no specific "lockdown" provision in the Constitution.

Banerjee vowed defiance: "As long as I was in the chair, I tolerated many things. Now I am a free bird, an ordinary person. I am a street fighter. I will remain on the streets and fight all atrocities. They can take action as per constitutional norm", while pivoting to national politics, citing solidarity calls from INDIA bloc leaders including Sonia and Rahul Gandhi. —*PTI*

Two Indian journalists win Pulitzer

NEW YORK, 5 MAY

Indian journalists Anand RK and Suparna Sharma have received the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for their work exposing digital surveillance and cyber fraud. Announced on Monday, they share the award in the Illustrated Reporting and Commentary category with Natalie Obiko Pearson of Bloomberg. The winning piece, titled "trAPPed," produced for Bloomberg, narrates the "riveting account" of an Indian neurologist who was placed under a "digital arrest." It employs a blend of "visuals and words" to highlight the "growing global challenges of surveillance and digital scams". The Pulitzer Prizes, overseen by Columbia University, are regarded as among the highest honours in journalism. —*PTI*

PM condemns attacks after 3 Indians injured in UAE

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday strongly condemned the attacks on the United Arab Emirates' port city of Fujairah that wounded three Indian nationals, and asserted that India stands in firm solidarity with the Gulf nation.

Modi's sharp denouncement of the attacks came a day after the Indians were injured in the strikes on a major oil industry zone in Fujairah. The UAE had accused Iran of carrying out the attack.

"Strongly condemn the attacks on the UAE that resulted in injuries to three Indian nationals. Targeting civilians and infrastructure is unacceptable," Modi said on social media. "India stands in firm solidarity with the UAE and reiterates its support for the peaceful resolution of all issues through dialogue and diplomacy," he said.

The attack on Fujairah city came as the ceasefire between the US and Iran came under strain in the Strait of Hormuz.

- This comes a day after the Indians were injured in the strikes on oil industry zone. The UAE had accused Iran of carrying out the attack.

The UAE's defence ministry on Monday said its air defence systems engaged 12 ballistic missiles, three cruise missiles and four drones launched from Iran. The ministry affirmed that it "remains fully prepared and ready to deal with any threats and will firmly confront anything that aims to undermine the security of the country." —*PTI*

US links Hormuz 'Project freedom' to India's LPG needs

Meanwhile, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has termed President Donald Trump's "Project Freedom" plan, under which the United States would help guide stranded ships through the Strait of Hormuz, as a "humanitarian effort" aimed at safeguarding critical global supply chains, including liquified petroleum gas (LPG), vital for daily cooking needs in India. Speaking to Fox News, Bessent said, "This is a humanitarian effort... It's not only energy that's in there, but it's also fertiliser, it's food transport, it's LPG for the more than the billion-plus people in India use to cook," he said. —*Agencies*

SC: PIL has become 'Paisa, Political Interest Litigation'

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Commenting on the misuse of PILs, the Supreme Court on Tuesday remarked that Public Interest Litigation has now become 'Private Interest Litigation', 'Publicity Interest Litigation', 'Paisa Interest Litigation' and 'Political Interest Litigation'.

This observation came from a nine-judge Constitution bench while they were hearing petitions regarding discrimination against women at religious sites, including the Sabarimala temple in Kerala, as well as the scope of religious freedom across various faiths.

The bench comprised Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices BV Nagarathna, MM Sundresh, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, Augustine George Masih, Prasanna B Varale, R Mahadevan and Joymalya Bagchi.

The top court questioned the objective of the Indian Young Lawyers Association over its 2006 PIL challenging the prohibition of women aged 10 to 50 from entering the Sabarimala Temple in Kerala.

Advocate Ravi Prakash Gupta, representing the Indian Young Lawyers Association, argued that the PIL was based on four newspaper articles published in June 2006. In response, the CJI remarked that the PIL should have been dismissed outright. "How does this article give the cause of action to file a PIL? It is easy to get articles written for the sake of filing PILs," the bench said.

Justice Nagarathna added, "We have been entertaining PILs in High Courts and in the Supreme Court for the general public who need it.

Not for articles being written in newspapers.

"Public Interest Litigation has now become Private Interest Litigation, Publicity Interest Litigation, Paisa Interest Litigation and Political Interest Litigation. All are called PILs, but we entertain only real and genuine PILs," she said. —*PTI*

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Vote tampering: HC stays FIR against BJP's Jeevaraj in Sringeri

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

Karnataka High Court has temporarily stayed the FIR registered against BJP leader DN Jeevaraj, who was declared the winner from Sringeri assembly on 3 May, three years after the election. The seat was previously held by Congress candidate TD Raje Gowda, but following a court-ordered recount of votes, Jeevaraj was declared the winner.

The FIR was based on a complaint by Congress election agent Sudhir Kumar Murolli, alleging tampering with postal ballots by Jeevaraj, two gazetted officers Vedamurthy and KN Ramesh from Chikkamagaluru, and unknown others. The bench, presided over by Justice V Srishananda, stayed the FIR and directed the state government to submit relevant material before the court. —*PTI*

Chadha meets Prez, accuses AAP of vendetta

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha on Tuesday accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Punjab government of indulging in 'vendetta politics' and misusing the state machinery to target the MPs who recently quit the party and merged with the BJP in the Rajya Sabha. "The Aam Aadmi Party, which accuses everyone else of revenge politics, is today itself indulging in dangerous vendetta politics. Since 24 April, when we left AAP and merged with the BJP, our MPs are being systematically targeted and harassed," Chada said. —*PTI*

>>>MORE ON PAGE 3

FIRE AFTER LPG PIPELINE LEAK CAUSES PANIC IN BIDAR; GAS COMPANY BLAMED

BIDAR, 5 MAY

A fire broke out on Tuesday following a leak in an LPG pipeline laid under the AMRUT scheme near Kamath Hotel in Jail Colony of Bidar city but was brought under control, narrowly averting a major disaster.

The incident, which occurred early in the morning, caused panic among the public, though a major disaster was narrowly avoided.

Fire personnel brought the situation under control. LPG providing companny was called in, and the gas leak was stopped. —*Salar News*

AMID WEST ASIA WAR

Govt gives ₹18,100 cr credit to MSMEs, airlines

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme with an outlay of Rs 18,100 crore to support MSMEs and airlines impacted by the ongoing West Asia conflict.

This is expected to facilitate additional credit of Rs 2.55 lakh crore, including Rs 5,000 crore for airlines. Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said it aims to address financial stress and ensure liquidity.

Airlines can avail up to 100 per cent of peak credit capped at Rs 1,500 crore, while other eligible institutions may access up to 20 per cent of working capital, up to Rs 100 crore. Credit guarantee coverage will be 100 per cent for MSMEs and 90 per cent for non-MSMEs and airlines, routed through the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd. The tenure is seven years for airlines with two-year moratorium, and five years for MSMEs with one-year moratorium. —*PTI*

India remains top global remittance recipient: UN

UNITED NATIONS, 5 MAY

India received over USD 137 billion in remittances in 2024, making it the world's leading remittance recipient and the only nation to surpass USD 100 billion, according to the UN agency on migration. The World Migration Report 2026, released by the International Organization for Migration, states, "India consistently leads as the top recipient of remittances, followed by Mexico."

The report highlights India, Mexico, the Philippines, and France as the top four recipients. Since 2010, India has been the leading remittance receiver, with figures rising from USD 53.48 billion in 2010 to USD 137.67 billion in 2024. The report notes that South Asia experiences the highest growth at 11.8 per cent, driven by inflows to India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

The US remains the main source of international remittances, surpassing USD 100 billion in 2024, followed by Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, and Germany. The report also reveals that over one million international students came from China in 2022, with India ranking second at more than 6,20,000. It highlights efforts by India to turn brain drain into "brain gain," through diaspora conventions and innovation hubs. —*PTI*

Sringeri recount was manipulated, says CM

Calls it 'vote dacoity by BJP', says govt is preparing a legal recourse

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at a presser with MLAs and Congress' Sringeri candidate Raje Gowda (right) who lost, on Tuesday —*SALAR*

The outcome for the Sringeri Assembly poll recounting was manipulated by BJP candidate DN Jeevaraj, said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday. He claimed that valid postal ballot votes in favour of Congress leader TD Raje Gowda were tampered with during the recounting process, and vowed legal recourse.

Following a Karnataka High Court order on an election petition filed by Jeevaraj, challenging Gowda's election, the reverification and recounting were conducted on Saturday. After the reverification and recount of postal ballots, votes polled in favour of Raje Gowda were reduced by 255, the returning officer had said.

A report on the matter has been submitted to the Election Commission of India for further action, the officer added.

Gowda had won the 2023 Assembly polls from Sringeri by 201 votes, defeating his nearest rival Jeevaraj.

However, Siddaramaiah said at a press conference in Bengaluru that there was "a clear case of criminal conspiracy" during the exercise conducted on 2 May.

- Siddaramaiah alleged that the returning officer declared the results prematurely, which was against the law.

"There is a second mark on the votes polled in favour of Raje Gowda. They had accepted these as valid votes. Subsequently, another mark was made by officials," he alleged.

When asked who was behind the alleged conspiracy, the CM replied, "It was hatched by Jeevaraj and others. It is planned".

Siddaramaiah added that the returning officer (RO) acted improperly by declaring the result despite the presence of an Election Commission observer during the recounting.

"Immediately after the counting, the returning officer announced the result. This is against the law," he said.

He pointed out that Gowda had originally won by 201 votes, but after the recounting, the BJP candidate was declared the winner by 52 votes. "The BJP has committed a criminal act of conspiracy. This is not vote chori but vote dacoity".

The CM said a police complaint had already been filed by Gowda's election agent, Sudhir Kumar. "We want transparency and free and fair elections. That is what our Constitution mandates."

He said that the government was "preparing an appeal challenging the returning officer's announcement." He added that he would order a forensic examination into the alleged tampering of postal ballots.

On the victories in Bagalkot and Davangere South, Siddaramaiah said that this was foreshadowing the Congress' return in 2028. —*PTI*

Speaker delaying induction of BJP Sringeri 'winner': Ashoka meets Guv

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

R Ashoka meets Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot at the Lok Bhavan, Tuesday —*X @RASHOKABJP*

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka sought Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot's intervention, alleging that the Speaker was yet to administer oath to BJP's Sringeri candidate DN Jeevaraj, even though he won after the recounting.

Ashoka alleged that Speaker UT Khader was avoiding his phone calls on the issue, and stated that Jeevaraj was the rightful winner of the seat.

"When I met him, he started lecturing me on the law. The Speaker himself became an MLA in the same way and did not go to court at that time. Even though there is a 45-day window for any MLA to approach the court, it does not prevent them from taking the oath. However, Khader alone is not allowing the oath and has created a new precedent," Ashoka alleged.

Ashoka noted that "responsibility to administer the oath to MLAs lies with the Governor, and if necessary, he can himself or through his representative appoint a senior MLA to administer the oath."

Ashoka and Jeevaraj defended the recounting process and hit back at Siddaramaiah over his allegation of "vote dacoity".

"If there is any dacoity in this State, the first dacoits are the Congress people themselves. They are looters, not just dacoits. Like Alibaba and the Forty Thieves, your entire Cabinet is like that," Ashoka alleged.

Jeevaraj, who has now been declared elected after the recount, rejected allegations of tampering and termed them baseless. —*Agencies*

CRIME BEAT

Two held for stealing gold from Zameer's house

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

Police have detained two men in connection with the theft of gold ornaments worth Rs 1.13 crore from the residence of Karnataka Housing Minister BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan last month. The theft was reported on 15 April at his Pulakeshinagar home. The prime suspect, known to the family and a distant relative, was detained near a college in Govindapura on 16 April.

During interrogation, he admitted to the theft along with another accomplice, who was later arrested from Mathikere. Shivajinagar police said the accused revealed that the stolen jewellery had been pledged at jewellery shops in Mathikere and Kammagondanahalli.

On 20 April, police recovered 759 grams of gold jewellery from a shop in Mathikere, valued at Rs 1.13 crore. Zameer's mother had said that the jewellery, was kept in a cupboard. —*PTI*

FIR filed after drone spotted over ISRO's campus

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

An unmanned aerial vehicle was allegedly spotted flying over the ISRO's ISITE campus in the CIty, a designated "No Drone Zone", following which a probe has been launched, police said on Tuesday. The incident occurred at around 8.16am on 2 May, they said.

A probe was launched following a complaint by a sub-inspector from the CISF who spotted the unidentified drone flying at a height of approximately 80 to 100 feet over the ISITE (Satellite Integration and Test Establishment) campus for about 10 to 12 seconds, police said.

The ISRO ISITE campus is a highly sensitive and restricted area, designated as a "No Drone Zone," the FIR stated. Any unauthorised aerial activity in such a sensitive zone poses a serious threat to security.

Police said a case has been registered at HAL police station. —*PTI*

Six arrested with MDMA, hydro ganja worth Rs 20 crore

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

Police have arrested six individuals for allegedly purchasing banned narcotics at low prices and selling them to the public, including college students. The operation led to the seizure of 8kg 58gm of MDMA, 5kg 700gm of hydro ganja, four mobile phones, and a vehicle used in the offence. The total value of the seized items is Rs 10.05 crore, with an estimated market value of Rs 20.10 crore.

The searches followed tip-offs suggesting the sale of MDMA and hydro ganja within Yeshwanthpur and Nandini Layout police limits. The police said, "During these operations, six individuals were detained on different dates—two from other states and four locals." The accused confessed to buying the drugs from inter-state and local suppliers at low prices and selling them, with college students among the buyers. —*PTI*

City to get economic masterplan for 2027

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and officials during the signing of a Statement of Intent with ISEG Foundation to jointly prepare a Comprehensive Economic Master Plan for the BMR —*X @DKSHIVAKUMAR*

The State government on Tuesday signed a Statement of Intent (SOI) with ISEG Foundation to jointly develop a comprehensive economic masterplan for the Bengaluru Metropolitan Region (BMR), officials said.

Officials stated that the plan will outline an ambitious, data-driven and actionable vision for the BMR, covering key areas such as the economy, liveability, infrastructure and sustainability, with targets set for 2032 and 2037.

Officials said the blueprinting phase of the masterplan will take four to five months and is expected by mid-September.

"It will include a detailed diagnostic assessment of the BMR economy benchmarked against global City-regions, a co-created long-term vision, identification of key growth drivers, and 6-8 high-impact interventions across sectors such as technology, advanced manufacturing, biotech, tourism, housing, infrastructure and sustainability," a statement said.

Officials said the approach is modelled on the G-Hub initiative, a NITI Aayog-led programme aimed at developing economic masterplans for high-growth City-regions, with an aim to generate USD 500-750 billion in incremental GDP and create 20-25 million (2-2.5 crore) new jobs across 8-10 regions.

The plan aims to more than double the City's economy by 2032 and position it as a global peer, comparable to Tokyo, London and Singapore, the statement said.

To ensure execution, the Karnataka government has constituted a Steering Committee chaired by the Chief Secretary, with members from departments, including Urban Development, Finance, Electronics, IT and Biotechnology, Commerce and Industry, Bengaluru Metropolitan Region Development Authority, GBA, BMRCL, BMTC, Tourism and Higher Education, it said.

The Chief Commissioner of Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has been designated as the Senior Nodal Officer for coordination, while Sectoral Advisory Groups comprising industry experts and private sector leaders will be formed. Citizen groups will also be involved in planning. The Chief Minister and DyCM will conduct quarterly reviews.

BMR contributes over 43 per cent of Karnataka's GSDP and hosts India's largest concentration of IT, Global Capability Centres, aerospace and biotechnology activity, among others. The per capita income for the population of BMR is USD 8,850, nearly double the State average.

ISEG Foundation has developed economic masterplans for Mumbai, Visakhapatnam, Kashi-Vindhya and Pune. —*PTI*

What is BMR?

Bengaluru Metropolitan Region (BMR) spans over 8,000 sq km across three districts--Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural and Bengaluru South--with a population of 16 million and a GDP of USD 149 billion (FY25).

Man stabs mother-in-law for not showing baby on call

BELAGAVI, 5 MAY

A 26-year-old man allegedly stabbed his mother-in-law on Monday evening following a dispute over a video call

Accused Aravind Gavali has been arrested by Muragod police and remanded to judicial custody for allegedly stabbing Mahadevi Karigar, 45.

Mahadevi had married her daughter to Aravind about one-and-a-half years ago. The couple was blessed with a child two months ago, after which the woman had been staying at her parental home, police said.

Police said Aravind had been repeatedly insisting that his wife show him the baby over video calls. However, Mahadevi reportedly told him that it was not always possible to use the phone continuously due to household work. This led to frequent arguments between the two, during which the accused is said to have abused her verbally.

- The victim said that it was not possible to show him his baby due to household work

Mahadevi had warned Aravind against visiting her house. Taking this as a challenge, the accused allegedly went to her residence in Aladakatti village and attacked her with a knife before fleeing the spot.

The woman was shifted to the BIMS, where she is in the ICU. —*Salar News*

Black magic scare in Chikkamagaluru

CHIKKAMAGALURU, 5 MAY

An incident involving black magic has been reported from Balehonnur in Chikkamagaluru district, triggering concern within the Forest Department. Unidentified individuals allegedly performed occult rituals outside the residence of Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) Mohan, apparently targeting both the officer and his jeep driver. A mud pot containing photographs of the pair was placed near the gate of the officer's residence. Turmeric and vermilion were sprinkled over it before the pot was smashed. Mohan said suspected someone from the Department. —*Salar News*

MLA ticket issue hampers City's IPL final plans: BCCI

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is set to announce the venues for the IPL 2026 playoffs and final soon, but uncertainty surrounds the final location. BCCI sources reveal that playoff matches are likely to be split between Punjab and Karnataka, with Bengaluru facing complications over the free tickets to MLA that could prevent it from hosting it.

According to a BCCI source, the convention is for the defending champions to host the final. However, political issues in Bengaluru, particularly related to MLA tickets, are causing disruptions. The source stated, "IPL 2026 playoffs and final venue will be announced soon. Matches likely to be divided into Punjab and Karnataka, the last time winner should host the final, but MLA ticket issue is creating problems in Bengaluru, and if there is no solution, then BCCI will move the final to another city."

MLAs were seen lining up at Vidhana Soudha when the extra tickets were announced —*SALAR*

Earlier, Congress MLA Vijayanand Kashappanavar suggested that every MLA should receive at least five IPL tickets, claiming elected representatives are "VIPs" who shouldn't wait in line.

Following this, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said three tickets for RCB matches in the ongoing IPL will be provided to MLAs and MPs.

Home Minister G Parameshwara dismissed allegations of misuse.

He added, "Only MLAs themselves can go, or their family members can attend the IPL matches at the stadium, as it is clearly mentioned as 'non-transferable,' so others cannot use it." —*ANI*

Bionnovation Centre signs MOU with NABL for research startups

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

In a significant push to strengthen Karnataka's innovation ecosystem, the Bangalore Bioinnovation Centre (BBC) has signed an MoU with the NABL (National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories) to facilitate global recognition for startup-led research, officials said on Tuesday.

Under the agreement, startups operating within the BBC will gain simplified and accelerated access to National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories accreditation processes, reducing the time and complexity involved in validating new research and products, they said.

NABL CEO Ramanand N Shukla said the initiative would play a crucial role in making Karnataka a preferred destination for deep-tech research, innovation, and biotechnology entrepreneurship

According to Manjula N, Secretary to the Government (Electronics, IT & BT) and Chairperson of the BBC, the collaboration will play a key role in positioning the State as a global hub for life sciences innovation.

"We have already supported over 512 innovation projects, including 24 global startups and 74 patents," she was quoted as saying in a statement. —*PTI*

17 escape as govt bus catches fire

HAVERI, 5 MAY

A major tragedy was averted after a State-run bus traveling from Bengaluru to Gadag caught on fire near Devaragudda, in Ranebennur taluk of Haveri district, in the early hours of Tuesday.

The incident occurred when the bus was proceeding along the National Highway and a sudden fire broke out in the engine compartment. Thick smoke quickly engulfed the vehicle, triggering panic among the passengers.

The driver immediately pulled over to the roadside and instructed all passengers to disembark without delay. All 17 passengers onboard managed to escape safely.

Within minutes, the fire spread rapidly and gutted the

entire bus. Fire and emergency services personnel rushed to the spot and doused the flames, but the vehicle was completely destroyed by then.

Preliminary investigations suggest that a short circuit may have caused the fire, but the exact cause is yet to be ascertained. —*Salar News*

BOOST FOR PRECISION

KIA rolls out AI airside safety system

HAVERI, 5 MAY

Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) on Tuesday announced the introduction of an integrated Smart Airside Safety System at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), marking a significant step forward to strengthen the operational safety and control across critical airside zones at the airport.

The system has been designed to enhance safety at cross-service roads, where aircraft and ground vehicle movements intersect, it said.

The system brings together AI-based computer vision, intelligent automation, and centralised control to support safe right-of-way management, improve operational

efficiency, and enable greater precision in airside operations, Bangalore International Airport Limited, which operates Kempegowda International Airport, said in a statement.

According to BIAL, Cross Service Roads (CSR) are among the most sensitive areas in airport operations, requiring precise and seamless coordination between aircraft and ground vehicles.

Traditionally, right-of-way protection at these intersections relied on manual or semi-manual inset light activation, creating dependence on human intervention, increasing the risk of delays, and limiting operational visibility.

"To address these challenges, the system uses a real-time situational intelligence framework that combines computer vision-based detection of vehicle movement, contextual risk assessment, and automated signalling into a unified operating model," BIAL said.

"AI-enabled cameras interpret activity at CSR intersections, identify potential right-of-way conflicts, detect non-compliant movements, and validate zone clearance in real time," it added. —*PTI*

Will Vijay ally with AIADMK or DMK?

Vijay had called DMK his political rival and NDA his ideological enemy

CHENNAI, 5 MAY

Will he, or won't he, and if he does, with whom? That is the question now at the forefront as alliances take centre stage in Tamil Nadu's post-poll arithmetic. Actor-turned-politician Vijay and his Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) face the crucial challenge of whether they can stitch together enough support to form a government or whether the state is headed for a hung Assembly.

TVK won 108 seats in the 23 April polls, while DMK secured 59 and AIADMK 47.

The Congress has 5 MLAs, PMK 4, IUML 2, CPI and CPI(M) 2 each, and VCK 2. The BJP, DMDK and AMMK won one seat each. TVK now needs post-poll support to cross the 118-seat majority mark in the 234-member Assembly.

TVK supporters celebrate in Chennai —PTI

Will Vijay join hands with the DMK, whom he has called his political rival, or with the AIADMK-led NDA, which he views as an ideological rival?

As Vijay weighs his options, political parties in Tamil Nadu have already begun to play their game, with backchannel talks and positioning underway across blocs.

DMK leader TKS Elangovan said TVK cannot form a government with Congress support alone, pointing to its limited numbers.

He added that without AIADMK backing, the arithmetic does not add up and warned that failure to secure a majority could lead to a hung Assembly and possible fresh elections.

Within Congress, AICC in-charge Girish Chodankar admitted that grassroots workers had favoured an alliance with TVK, believing it could have delivered a sweeping mandate. However, he said the leadership stayed with the DMK under the INDIA bloc, describing it as a long-standing and trusted ally, despite internal dissatisfaction and some cadre drift towards TVK.

Meanwhile, VCK chief Thol Thirumavalavan said the question of supporting TVK has not yet been considered by his party or the CPI and CPI(M). He stressed that the Left and VCK continue to take decisions jointly and remain aligned in secular politics, with no formal discussion on post-poll support so far. —PTI

Veteran DMK leader loses by 1 vote

In a dramatic electoral upset, senior DMK leader and State Co-operatives Minister K R Periakaruppan lost the Tiruppattur Assembly seat by just one vote in the Tamil Nadu polls. Election Commission data showed TVK candidate Seenivasa Sethupathy R winning with 83,375 votes, while Periakaruppan secured 83,374. The minister had led by 30 votes in the penultimate round before the final tally swung. BJP's K C Thirumaran finished third with 29,054 votes. The result highlights TVK's surge, which emerged as the single largest party with 108 seats. —PTI

UDF talks govt formation, CM race intensifies

T'PURAM, 5 MAY

A day after the Congress-led UDF swept back to power in Kerala, the mood in the alliance is one of joy, relief and cautious hope. At the same time, discussions on forming the new government have already begun, with leaders holding meetings and informal talks to decide the next steps.

Senior party leaders have begun making moves to win the Chief Minister's post.

There are three major contenders in the Congress for the post. They are the Leader of the Opposition, VD Satheesan, senior leader Ramesh Chennithala, and AICC general secretary KC Venugopal, who is a Lok Sabha MP.

As the Congress has 63 seats, it is not under pressure to yield to alliance partners.

Leader of the Opposition VD Satheesan celebrates with his supporters —PTI

An AICC team will be deputed by the high command and along with the AICC general secretary and Kerala in-charge Deepa Das Munshi, they will hold discussions with party MLAs. They are expected to meet MLAs individually, sources said.

They are also likely to meet leaders of alliance partners, including the IUML.

After that, the CPP will meet and pass a one-line resolution authorising the AICC to take a decision on the next Chief Minister, sources said.

> **The verdict is a huge setback to the CPI(M)'s violent, autocratic and arrogant politics. The Chief Minister promoted violence, and the people have voted against such stands**
>
> -Sunny Joseph, KPCC Chief

Meanwhile, the CPI(M)-led LDF, which suffered a huge setback in the election, will discuss the reasons for the rout.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan who resigned after the defeat, has not spoken to the media. He is expected to meet the media after the party secretariat meeting on Wednesday. — PTI

BJP came second in six Kerala constituencies

THIRU'PURAM, 5 MAY

The BJP which gained three seats in the Kerala Assembly polls came second place in six other constituencies.

The BJP came second in Thiruvalla, Palakkad, Malampuzha, Attingal, Kasaragod and Manjeshwar.

In Thiruvalla, the BJP's state general secretary Anoop Antony came second with 43,078 votes and lost by 10,146 to advocate Varghese Mammen of Kerala Congress.

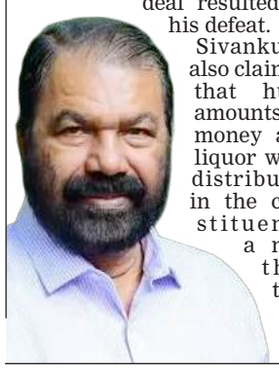
He also increased the party's vote share. In 2021, the BJP came third with 16.25 per cent of the votes, while this time it got 30.61 per cent.

In Palakkad, firebrand leader Sobha Surendran, lost to UDF's Ramesh Pisharody by 13,147 votes. She got 49,052 votes, while Pisharody got 62,199 votes.

However, she improved the BJP's vote share compared to the 2024 by-election in Palakkad. In 2024, it had a vote share of 28.80 per cent, while this time the party got 33.33 per cent, as per Election Commission data.

In Attingal, advocate P Sudheer came second with 45,788 votes, 13,375 votes behind the winner CPI(M)'s OS Ambika. Sudheer too increased the BJP's vote share as to the 2021 assembly polls, when it had come second with 25.92 per cent of the votes. This time, the BJP got 30.54 per cent of the votes. — PTI

SIVANKUTTY BLAMES UDF-BJP DEAL FOR HIS DEFEAT IN NEMOM



General Education Minister V Sivankutty, who lost from his sitting seat in Nemom here said on Tuesday that a UDF-BJP deal resulted in his defeat.

Sivankutty also claimed that huge amounts of money and liquor were distributed in the constituency and that too contributed to the BJP's win.

- He claimed that there was no scope for his defeat from Nemom as per CPI(M) calculations, but it happened due to the deal

Speaking to a TV channel here, he claimed that there was no scope for his defeat from Nemom as per CPI(M) calculations, but it happened due to the deal between the BJP and the UDF. — PTI

WHAT HELPED BJP'S RISE IN KERALA?

BJP leader V Muraleedharan said the following helped the party gain three seats in state:

ANTI-INCUMBENCY WAVE : Widespread public dissatisfaction against the ruling LDF translated into support for the BJP in several constituencies.

SABARIMALA GOLD LOSS CONTROVERSY:
The Sabarimala gold loss occurred when CPI(M)'s Kazhakoottam candidate Kadakampally Surendran was the devaswom minister, and this is seen to have translated into votes for BJP

AAP indulging in dangerous vendetta: Raghav meets Murmu

President Droupadi Murmu, centre, during a meeting with Rajya Sabha MPs Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak, Rajinder Gupta and Ashok Mittal at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi—PTI

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha on Tuesday accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Punjab government of indulging in 'vendetta politics' and misusing the state machinery to target the MPs who recently quit the party and merged with the BJP in the Rajya Sabha.

Chadha, along with three other MPs, met President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday and submitted a representation alleging harassment and "politically motivated" action against them following their exit from AAP. Rajya Sabha MPs Rajinder Gupta and Ashok Mittal were part of the delegation.

"All those MPs who exercised their constitutional right to express disagreement with the Aam Aadmi Party and chose to leave it, and all these incidents and developments, have been presented today before the President of India. I also want to tell the Aam Aadmi Party that as long as we were obedient, we were considered cultured. The moment we left, we were branded corrupt," Chadha told reporters here after the meeting.

"The Aam Aadmi Party, which accuses everyone else of revenge politics, is today itself indulging in dangerous vendetta politics. Since 24 April, when we left AAP and merged with the BJP, our MPs are being systematically targeted and harassed," he said.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann met President Murmu and sought the termination of membership of six Rajya Sabha members from the state who defected to the BJP, saying their act was a "mockery" and "murder" of the Constitution. Mann met the President alone at Rashtrapati Bhavan, where he submitted a memorandum along with the signatures of all MLAs. —PTI

MINORITY MATTERS

Cong has most Muslim winners; votes split in WB

The recently concluded Assembly elections across Assam, Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu have once again brought the role of minority voting patterns into sharp focus, with Congress and its allies performing strongly in Muslim-dominated constituencies even as broader political realignments reshaped outcomes across states.

ASSAM: HIGH SUCCESS RATE FOR CONG IN MUSLIM SEATS

In Assam, 18 out of 19 Congress MLAs are Muslims. The party fielded 20 Muslim candidates, of whom 18 won, while only one non-Muslim candidate emerged victorious among 79 non-Muslims. Ally Raijor Dal secured two seats, one of which was won by a Muslim, while the other went to Akhil Gogoi, who is under NIA investigation for alleged Maoist links. Despite the Congress performance in minority pockets, the ruling NDA retained power with a two-thirds majority, winning 102 of 126 seats.

WEST BENGAL: FRAGMENTATION OF MINORITY VOTES

West Bengal witnessed one of its most significant political upsets in recent years, with the BJP winning 206 seats and ending the TMC's 15-year rule. Analysts attribute the outcome largely to a split in minority votes, which altered the state's electoral arithmetic.

Congress workers celebrate during vote tabulation on the day of Kerala Assembly election results, in Thiruvananthapuram—PTI

In Muslim-dominated districts such as Murshidabad, Malda and Uttar Dinajpur—where Muslims account for over 50–66 per cent of the population—the TMC's long-standing dominance weakened sharply. Of the 43 seats across these three districts, the BJP increased its tally from 8 in 2021 to 19, while the TMC dropped from 35 to 22. The remaining seats were divided among Congress, CPI(M) and smaller regional players, including Humayun Kabir's Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP).

> Of the 723 MLAs elected this time, at least 104 are Muslims, but not a single one is from BJP.

In Murshidabad, the most critical minority belt, the TMC's seat share fell sharply from 20 of 22 seats in 2021 to just nine this time, while the BJP rose from two to nine seats. The shift is linked to fragmentation of Muslim votes across multiple parties, including Congress, CPI(M), AJUP and the Indian Secular Front, rather than consolidation behind a single alternative.The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, which saw nearly 7.8 lakh deletions in Murshidabad, also formed a key backdrop. However, analysts note that instead of triggering consolidation, it coincided with further dispersal of votes across parties.

In constituencies such as Raninagar, Domkal, Rejinagar and Nowda, multi-cornered contests split the anti-BJP vote, enabling the saffron party to win seats without major gains in its own vote share. In contrast, in Hindu-majority pockets within these districts, the BJP benefited from stronger consolidation, particularly in seats like Kandi and Nabagram.

Malda and Uttar Dinajpur reflected similar patterns. BJP improved modestly, while the TMC's margins narrowed due to vote division between Congress, Left parties and the ruling party. In several constituencies, the combined opposition vote exceeded the TMC's losing margin, indicating decisive impact of fragmentation. —PTI

TAMIL NADU: LIMITED BUT SYMBOLIC WIN

In Tamil Nadu, Congress fielded two Muslim candidates, of whom one won. The election saw actor Vijay's TVK emerge as the single largest party with 108 seats, significantly altering the political landscape.

> BJP fielded zero Muslim candidates out of 90 in Assam, in a clear sign of polarisation in the state.

KERALA: MUSLIMS HELP IN UDF COMEBACK

Kerala saw 35 Muslim MLAs elected in the 140-member Assembly. Of these, 30 belong to the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF). The Congress itself won eight Muslim MLAs, while its key ally, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), contributed 22 Muslim representatives.

The election also marked a major political shift as the Congress-led UDF returned to power after a decade, ousting the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF).

TMC worker killed in post-poll violence in WB

TMC offices vandalised in WB, it blames BJP, but the saffron party denies any involvement

KOLKATA, 5 MAY

Post-poll violence broke out across West Bengal on Tuesday following the BJP's landslide victory in the Assembly elections, with one TMC worker reportedly killed in Birbhum and several incidents of arson and vandalism reported in Kolkata and other districts, police said.

A TMC worker, Abir Sheikh, who was a Nanoor Anchal Committee member, was allegedly hacked to death during a clash at Santoshpur village in Birbhum's Nanoor area. He died on the spot, while another person was injured. Police said reinforcements were deployed and tension prevailed in the area. TMC MLA-elect from Nanoor Bidhan Majhi alleged BJP involvement, but BJP leader Shyampada Mondal denied the charge, demanding a fair probe.

In Kolkata, incidents of vandalism and arson were reported at multiple TMC offices, including in Tollygunge, Kasba, Baruipur, Kamarhati and Baranagar. Similar attacks were reported in Howrah and Baharampur, with mobs carrying BJP flags. Offices linked to TMC leaders, including former minister Aroop Biswas and councillor Sushanta Ghosh, were also damaged.

Trinamool Congress posted videos showing a vandalised party office in Jalpaiguri Ward 14; Another office is set on fire in Siliguri — *X@AITCOFFICIAL*

TMC leaders alleged attacks on party workers and offices in Murshidabad and Howrah, including the assault of candidate Samir Panja in Udaynarayanpur. The party also shared videos and images on social media claiming violence against its workers and offices, including a purported arson attack in Siliguri, though PTI could not independently verify some footage.

TMC MP Sagarika Ghosh shared visuals of a deceased party worker, calling the situation "horrifying". The party accused the BJP of unleashing violence after coming to power, while an Election Commission official said reports have been sought and strict action will follow against those involved.

BJP leader Rahul Sinha rejected the allegations, saying the violence could be an internal TMC matter and recalling attacks on BJP workers in 2021. He said police and central forces were now acting promptly.

'RS 5 CR FOR TMC TICKET'

In a separate development, former TMC MLA Manoj Tiwary alleged that he was denied a ticket for refusing to pay Rs 5 crore, claiming that around 70–72 candidates paid such amounts for nominations. He said, "The TMC chapter is over for me," and accused the party of corruption, adding that he was asked for money for the Shibpur ticket. —*PTI*

WHAT WENT WRONG FOR TMC?

West Bengal's election verdict reflects not only anti-incumbency but a deeper organisational breakdown within TMC, exposing structural weaknesses from the booth level to top leadership.

CORE ISSUE:
COLLAPSE OF ORGANISATIONAL LAYER

- Erosion of the "middle layer" linking leadership with grassroots cadre
- Weak booth-level coordination and weakening of local networks
- Decline of the party's traditional organisational "transmission belt"

LEADERSHIP DRIFT & MID-LEVEL DECLINE

- Exit/weakening of key organisers like Mukul Roy, Suvendu Adhikari, Partha Chatterjee.
- Several leaders defected or were sidelined due to controversies.
- BJP benefited from absorption of ex-TMC networks.

ABHISHEK BANERJEE'S STRUCTURAL RESET

- Reportedly dropped around 70 sitting MLAs in candidate reshuffle.
- Push for performance-based selection and new leadership. Replacement of experienced MLAs weakened local influence networks.

CENTRALISATION EFFECT

- Decision-making increasingly concentrated at top level.
- Reduced autonomy of district and block leaders.
- Weak feedback loop from ground to leadership.
- Data-driven strategies replaced local political intuition.
- Coordination failures at booth level in tight contests.
- Welfare schemes failed to offset organisational erosion.

- Corruption allegations and governance fatigue impacted credibility.
- Simultaneous reforms and anti-incumbency created pressure overload.

LACK OF JOBS

Lack of jobs and negligible industrial development led to the Trinamool Congress (TMC) being routed in West Bengal. Reports say over 110 listed firms and thousands of companies shifted headquarters out of Bengal between 2011–2025 due to perceived policy instability and a hostile business climate.

TMC fails to open account in 9 of 23 dists

BJP whitewashed the Trinamool Congress in nine of the 23 districts of West Bengal, grabbing all the 68 seats these regions had on its way to paint the state saffron.

The mandate, spanning from north Bengal hills to parts of south Bengal, reflected a strong anti-TMC wave, with over 22 ministers defeated, including Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in her constituency. Analysts said 63 per cent of Cabinet ministers lost, indicating a sharp rejection of the ruling leadership. —*PTI*

ED issues lookout notice against Kolkata DCP

KOLKATA, 5 MAY

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued a lookout notice against Kolkata Police Deputy Commissioner Shantanu Sinha Biswas in connection with a money laundering case, an official said on Tuesday.

The lookout notice was issued after Biswas evaded multiple summons issued to him by the ED.

The notice has been circulated across airports, railway stations and other transit points to prevent any attempt by Biswas to leave India, he said.

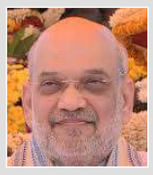
The ED alleged that Biswas failed to comply with multiple summons during the course of its investigation.

The ED raided Biswas's residence during the assembly election in the state.

ED officials had raided his Fern Road residence in Kolkata in connection with a case linked to alleged land grabbing and extortion involving an individual known as 'Sona Pappu'.

A day after the searches, Biswas's sons, Sayantan and Manish, were summoned to the Enforcement Directorate's, but they did not appear. —*PTI*

Shah named BJP observer for Bengal



The BJP named Union Home Minister Amit Shah as the party's observer for the election of its legislative party leader in West Bengal.

The party also appointed Union minister JP Nadda as its observer for the election of its Assam legislative party leader.

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini was made co-observer for the election of the BJP's Assam legislative party leader.

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi was appointed as co-observer for the election of the BJP's WB legislative party leader. — PTI

BJP MLA prays for party's martyrs

Baharampur's MLA-elect Subrata Maitra tonsured his head and performed libation, saying it was in memory of the BJP workers killed after the 2021 polls in West Bengal whose sacrifice propelled the party to power in the state.

Alleging that several BJP workers were "killed by TMC goons" after the 2021 state polls, Maitra said his party would always remember their sacrifice.

"I prayed for those souls. Without their sacrifice, the BJP could not have come to power," he said. — PTI

BJP threatening biryani sellers: TMC

The TMC posted on X that "BJP thugs" are going door to door in West Bengal, threatening non-vegetarian food shops and biryani sellers, and asking them to shut down, relocate, or remove their names. The party called it part of a so-called "Poriborton" brought by the BJP. It further warned that such actions could escalate to restrictions on non-veg food. The TMC asserted that Bengal's cultural identity and food habits are under threat, stating it will resist attempts to control people's dietary choices. —*PTI*

Who will be WB's next CM?

BJP is yet to finalise its Chief Ministerial candidate for West Bengal. Suvendu Adhikari has emerged as frontrunner who defeated Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Bhabanipur by 15,105 votes and earlier in Nandigram. Dilip Ghosh, seen as architect of BJP's expansion in Bengal, recently won Kharagpur Sadar and remains key contender. Samik Bhattacharya, state BJP President and Rajya Sabha MP, is viewed as a consensus-builder. Agnimitra Paul is also under consideration.. —*PTI*

MAID FROM BURDWAN WINS ON BJP TICKET BY 12,000 VOTES

A maid earning Rs 4,500 a month, Kalita Majhi, has been elected BJP MLA from West Bengal's Ausgram constituency. She secured 1,07,692 votes, defeating Shyama Prasanna Lohar by 12,535 votes. A resident of Guskara Municipality, the 37-year-old has worked in local households for over two decades. Majhi had earlier contested the 2021 Assembly polls, losing to Abhedananda Thander of the TMC by 11,815 votes. Renominated by the BJP for her grassroots connect, her victory is seen as a case of socio-economic mobility. —*Salar News*

'Put petty politics aside, TMC loss not about 1 party'

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday termed the BJP's victory in Bengal and Assam assembly polls a "theft" of the mandate, and a big step forward in the saffron party's mission to "destroy" Indian democracy.

Gandhi also came out in support of the TMC, which has been trounced by the BJP in the polls, and urged those gloating over the loss of Mamata Banerjee's party to put petty politics aside.

"Some in the Congress, and others, are gloating about TMC's loss. They need to understand this clearly - the theft of Assam and Bengal's mandate is a big step forward by the BJP in its mission to destroy Indian democracy," Gandhi said in a post on X.

"Put petty politics aside. This is not about one party or another. This is about India," he said in his post.

The BJP, meanwhile, has accused Rahul Gandhi of hypocrisy over his allegations against the Election Commission and EVMs, and claimed that the INDIA bloc has "completely fallen apart" after the West Bengal election results.

- Gandhi came out in support of the TMC, which has been trounced by the BJP, and urged those gloating over the loss of TMC to put petty politics aside

In a video post on X, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla alleged that Gandhi questions electoral processes only after defeats but accepts results where his party wins.

Poonawalla accused Gandhi of making repeated allegations without evidence and said courts have not upheld such claims, aimed at avoiding accountability. He also accused outgoing West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of making similar excuses. —*PTI*

Delimitation key factor in NDA's landslide win in Assam

The 2023 delimitation of assembly constituencies emerged as a major factor behind the NDA's sweeping victory in Assam, where it secured a record 102 out of 126 seats. The redrawing of boundaries reshaped electoral demographics, weakened traditional vote banks, and strengthened the ruling alliance's position.

How Delimitation shifted the political balance

- Constituency redrawing in 2023 reduced influence of minority strongholds in several traditional seats.
- Muslim-majority constituencies were split and merged with indigenous-dominated areas.
- This led to dilution of minority vote concentration in key regions.

Impact on minority vote base

- Minority-dominated constituencies reduced from 35 to fewer than 25.
- Opposition (Congress + AIUDF) strong wins largely confined to these 25 seats.
- Of 24 Opposition wins outside NDA dominance, 22 were Muslim candidates.

Reservation changes

The delimitation kept number of assembly seats the same at 126 but reserved more constituencies for the Scheduled Tribe and the Scheduled Caste, with the former being increased from 16 to 19 and the latter to nine from eight.

Barpeta and Goalpara (West), seats having a significant number of Bengali-speaking Muslims, were reserved for the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribe, respectively, and the NDA wrested both from the Congress.

Bodoland region impact

- Tribal reserved seats increased from 11 to 15.
- NDA ally BPF won 10 of these 15 seats.
- BPF's only Muslim candidate lost.

NDA performance

- NDA dominated reserved constituencies overall.
- Even though AGP fielded 13 Muslim candidates.
- NDA allies ensured majority gains in reshaped constituencies.

SAME AS 2021

7 women enter 126-member Assam assembly

GUWAHATI, 5 MAY

Of the 59 women candidates who contested the polls to the 126-member Assam Assembly, only seven managed to win, the same as the 2021 results.

In the new Assembly, the ruling NDA will have six women legislators, while the opposition Congress has one. Women comprise 49.98 per cent of the total 2.50 crore electorate in the state.

The BJP has increased the tally of its women MLAs to four, while its allies Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and Bodoland People's Front will have one each. Of the 14 women candidates the Congress fielded, the highest among all parties, only one managed to win.

The NDA is set to form the government in Assam for the third consecutive term.

The most prominent woman candidate to win the election is state Finance Minister Ajanta Neog, who retained her Golaghat constituency for the sixth consecutive term.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma with state BJP president Dilip Saikia during celebrations amid vote tabulation as the party leads in the Assembly elections, at the party headquarters, in Guwahati, Assam —*PTI*

The other BJP candidates to win are its Mahila Morcha state unit chief Nilima Devi in Mangaldoi and Niso Terangpi from Diphu.

The AGP's Diptimayee Choudhury retained the Bongaigaon seat, while the BPF's Sewli Mohilary won from Kokrajhar. The lone woman Congress candidate to win the seat is first-timer Baby Begum from Dhubri. —*PTI*

Three members of 'lottery baron' Martin's family elected in TN

CHENNAI, 5 MAY

The Martin group, headed by "lottery baron" Santiago Martin, has secured a significant political foothold in the 2026 assembly elections in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Three members of the family successfully contested on different party tickets.

Representing the AIADMK, Martin's wife, Leemarose, won a closely contested race in Lalgudi in Tiruchi district, while his son Jose Charles Martin, who contested under the LJK banner in Kamaraj Nagar in Puducherry, secured a comfortable victory.

Santiago Martin's son-in-law, Aadhav Arjuna, who ran on a ticket for Vijay's TVK, won from the Villivakkam in Chennai. Leemarose Martin defeated TVK candidate KU PA Krishnan by a margin of 2,739 votes in Lalgudi.

Jose Charles Martin defeated Congress candidate PK Devadoss by 10,205 votes. Aadhav Arjuna also defeated DMK's Karthik Mohan by a margin of 17,302 votes. —*PTI*

Kerala eateries to shut down today over LPG hike

Online food delivery will also be suspended, says KHRA

T'PURAM, 5 MAY

Hotels, restaurants, bakeries, and canteens across Kerala will remain closed for 24 hours on 6 May in protest against the steep hike in cooking gas prices, the KHRA said on Tuesday.

As part of its state-wide protests, online food delivery services will also be suspended on the day, the association said in a press release.

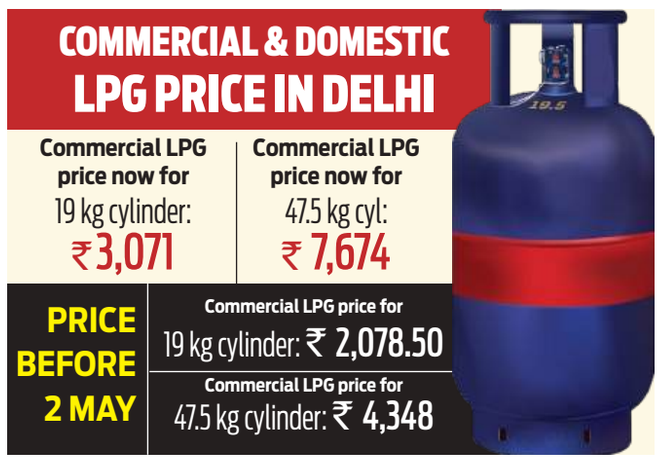
The protest has been called to demand a rollback of the LPG price hike.

The Kerala Hotel and Restaurant Association said that protest marches and dharnas will be organised in front of petroleum companies offices and Central establishments across the state.

In Ernakulam, a protest dharna will be held in front of the Indian Oil Corporation office at Panampilly Nagar, which will be inaugurated by its state president, G Jayapal.

Similar protests will be held at district headquarters across Kerala, the association added.

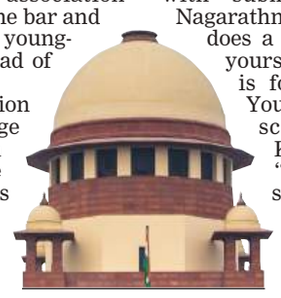
Several trade bodies, the Kerala Vyapari Vyavasayi Ekopana Samithi, Kerala Vyapari Vyavasayi Samithi, All Kerala Caterers Association, and Hostel Owners Federation, have extended support to the shutdown, KHRA office-bearers said. — *PTI*


COMMERCIAL & DOMESTIC LPG PRICE IN DELHI
Commercial LPG price now for 19 kg cylinder: ₹3,071
Commercial LPG price now for 47.5 kg cyl: ₹ 7,674
PRICE BEFORE 2 MAY
Commercial LPG price for 19 kg cylinder: ₹ 2,078.50
Commercial LPG price for 47.5 kg cylinder: ₹ 4,348

India's chief priest: SC raps PIL lawyer

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

"Are you the chief priest of the country?" the Supreme Court asked on Tuesday while slamming the Indian Young Lawyers Association over its 2006 PIL challenging the prohibition of women aged 10 to 50 from entering the Sabarimala Temple in Kerala. The court said that the PIL was an "abuse of the process of law" and the association should work for the bar and the welfare of its younger members instead of filing such PILs.



The observation of a nine-judge Constitution bench came while hearing petitions about discrimination against women at religious places, including the Sabarimala temple in Kerala. Advocate Ravi Prakash Gupta, appearing for the Indian Young Lawyers Association, submitted that there were four newspaper articles in June 2006, and the PIL was based on them. He argued that the association was not challenging the faith of Lord Ayyappa's devotees but was upholding it.

As the lawyer proceeded with submissions, Justice Nagarathna observed, "How does a juristic body like yours have a faith? This is for an individual. You don't have a conscience." Justice Kumar also asked, "Has your organisation passed a resolution to file a PIL? Has your president signed it?" — *PTI*

HV denies bail to Sukesh's wife in extortion case

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The Delhi High Court refused bail to Leena Paulose in the Rs 200 crore extortion case involving her husband, Sukesh Chandrasekhar, but granted her relief in a related money laundering case. Justice Prateek Jalan stated, "I have rejected the application in the MCOCA case but allowed it in (ED case)." Chandrasekhar is accused of duping wives of former Ranbaxy promoters by posing as officials. Police allege Chandrasekhar and associates used hawala and shell companies for proceeds of crime, with the ED investigating under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Several investigations are ongoing against Chandrasekhar across the country. —*PTI*

CBI files DA case against its own DySP, wife

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The CBI has registered a fresh case against its deputy superintendent of police and his wife for amassing Rs 98.33 lakh, 87 per cent above known income, during 2021–24. The couple failed to offer a satisfactory explanation for the assets, leading to a case under the Prevention of Corruption Act. The DySP is already under investigation for allegedly accepting Rs 5 crore in bribes in 2024 from various companies and individuals. Officials said, "The couple could not offer a satisfactory explanation for the assets," and the case was registered following the findings. —*PTI*

Stray dogs kill 9-yr-old girl in Rajasthan village

KOTA, 5 MAY

A nine-year-old girl was mauled to death by stray dogs in Alkodia village, Rajasthan. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla visited the family, offering Rs 1 lakh compensation and promising another Rs 1 lakh aid through public funding, and instructed authorities to take preventive action. The girl, Rinku Bheel, a Class 3 student, was attacked early Monday morning while in the fields. Deputy Superintendent Rajesh Tailor said, "Flesh was entirely removed and consumed by the stray dogs." Birla assured aid and directed authorities to ensure measures against stray dog attacks, following a similar incident in February. —*PTI*

Malayalam actor Santhosh Nair dies in accident

PATHANAMTHITTA, 5 MAY

Malayalam actor Santhosh Nair died early Tuesday after a collision with a lorry at Enathu in Keralam. The accident occurred at 6.30am; Nair's chest hit the steering wheel. His wife suffered rib fractures. Nair made his debut in 1982 with 'Ithu Njangalude Katha' and acted in over 100 films. His latest film, 'Mohiniyattam', is currently in theatres. Mohanlal called Nair his junior, saying, "He was like a brother to me." Suresh Gopi added, "His death leaves an irreplaceable void." —*PTI*

Pune rape: Child was strangled

PUNE, 5 MAY

The autopsy report has indicated "asphyxia" as the cause of death of the four-year-old girl, who was allegedly sexually assaulted and murdered in Pune last week, police said on Tuesday.

The 65-year-old suspect accused allegedly gagged the victim by stuffing a cloth in her mouth.

The accused, who works as a labourer, has a criminal history. He was booked on charges of molestation in 1998 and 2015 and later acquitted in both cases.

The girl was allegedly sexually assaulted and murdered by the suspect at Narsapur in Bhor tehsil of Pune district on 1 May, sparking massive outrage and protests.

The suspect allegedly lured the girl promising food and took her to a cattle enclosure where he sexually assaulted her and later killed her, police said.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday assured that the government will demand death penalty for the suspect and said the state will fast-track the trial.

The family of the suspect has also demanded that he be given the strictest punishment.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde assured residents of the Pune village of the murdered child that the government will not rest until the culprit is hanged.

The police have been asked to build a watertight case against the accused, Shinde told residents of Narsapur on Monday. — *PTI*

JUSTICE AT LAST

HC frees 50 seafarers; raps shippers for mistreating crew

MUMBAI, 5 MAY

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday directed the release of 50 seafarers stranded on three ships arrested off the Mumbai coast, and slammed the vessel owners for treating the crew worse than "pet animals" by providing only minimal food and water for months.

"Life comes only once. We don't believe in rebirth," the court observed while accusing the ship owners of being "least interested in human lives" and prioritising commercial activities over the crew.

The seafarers, in their plea in HC, claimed that they were stranded with minimum supply of food and water on the vessels, which were practically abandoned by the owners, following

their arrest for illegal fuel oil and bitumen transfers mid-sea, about 11 nautical miles from the city.

Fifty seafarers are ere stranded aboard MT Asphalt Star, MT Stellar Ruby and MT Al Jafzia, and seven of them moved the high court with a habeas corpus (produce the person) petition.

The court on Monday ordered the Yellow Gate police to produce all 50 seafarers before it on Tuesday.

All the seafarers were produced before Justices Ravindra Ghuge and Hiten Venegaonkar, and they informed that none of them wished to return to their vessels as they were wrongfully detained there.

The seafarers informed the bench that they were living on the vessels with minimal food and water and were given just 300 ml of water each day.

Ordering the release of all 50 seafarers, the bench stated that it would take care of human lives, while the vessel owners can take care of their arrested ships.

The court said that with minimum food and water, the health of the seafarers would take a hit, which cannot be permitted.

It directed the Yellow Gate police to complete all formalities for releasing the seafarers. — *PTI*

HC to appoint lawyers for Kejriwal, Sisodia

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The Delhi High Court announced it will appoint senior lawyers as amici curiae to represent AAP leaders Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, and Durgesh Pathak in the CBI case regarding their discharge in the liquor policy matter. The former Delhi chief minister and MLAs boycotted the hearing before Justice Sharma after she refused to recuse herself, citing conflicts of interest and bias concerns.

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma deferred the hearing on the CBI's petition challenging the trial court's decision until 8 May, stating that it would be appropriate to proceed once someone is appointed to represent the accused."

Solicitor General Mehta asked if the court was appointing representatives for Kejriwal and others, to which the judge said yes. She added, "We will list it on Friday. I will pass an order on amicus and start hearing." — *PTI*

Centre clears proposal to increase number of SC judges to 38

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The Union Cabinet cleared a proposal to increase the number of Supreme Court judges from 34 to 38, including the Chief Justice of India.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Tuesday that a bill will be brought in the next session of Parliament to raise the SC's strength by four judges.

The sanctioned strength of the SC is 34 judges, including the CJI. At present, the SC has two vacancies.

Once the bill is cleared by Parliament and is enacted, the sanctioned number of Supreme Court judges will stand at 38.

The strength of the Supreme Court was last increased from 30 to 33 (excluding the CJI) in 2019.

The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act 1956, as originally enacted, provided for the maximum number of judges (excluding the chief justice of India) as 10.

- The sanctioned strength of the SC is 34 judges, including the CJI. At present, the SC has two vacancies. Once the bill is okayed by parliament, the number of SC judges will rise to 38

This number was increased to 13 by the Supreme Court (Number of Judges), Amendment Act, 1960, and to 17 by another amendment to the law.

The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 1986, increased the strength of Supreme Court judges from 17 to 25, excluding the CJI. Subsequently, a fresh amendment in 2009 increased the strength of SC judges from 25 to 30.

The strength of the Supreme Court was increased to 33 (excluding the CJI) by amending the original law in 2019.

Article 124(3) of the Constitution states the qualifications to become a Supreme Court judge.

An Indian citizen who has either served as a high court judge for at least five years or as an advocate for 10 years, or is a distinguished jurist can be appointed to the SC.

The strength of the Supreme Court is increased based on the recommendation of the CJI, who writes to the Union Law Minister. After consulting the Finance Ministry, the Department of Justice sends a draft bill to the Cabinet. — *PTI*

500 held, assets seized in J&K anti-narco drive

JAMMU, 5 MAY

Around 500 individuals have been detained, and properties worth more than Rs 14.50 crore attached under the ongoing 'Nasha Mukt Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan', officials said today. The campaign, initiated by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on 11 April, aims to combat drug abuse.

Significant quantities of narcotics have also been seized, including 4.7kg of heroin, 27.13kg of charas, and over 209kg of ganja. In Kashmir, six movable properties valued at Rs 12.66 lakh and 14 immovable properties worth Rs 7.77 crore were attached.

Jammu saw 22 movable properties worth Rs 1.36 crore and nine immovable properties valued at Rs 5.54 crore seized. So far, 537 drug peddlers have been arrested and 502 FIRs registered. Sinha led padyatras in 10 districts of Jammu and two in Kashmir. .

He warned drug traffickers would be dealt with like terrorists, calling narcotics smuggling a form of silent terrorism, and directed police to dismantle drug trafficking networks within 30 days. —*PTI*

The President of Vietnam, To Lam, being received by Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary in Gaya in Bihar—*PTI*

Vietnamese President Lam visits Bihar's Gaya

GAYA, 5 MAY

Vietnamese President To Lam, on a three-day India tour, meditated under the Bodhi Tree and prayed at the Mahabodhi Temple here today. He was received at the airport by Chief Minister Choudhary and officials.

The Chief Minister said that Lam's visit would strengthen India-Vietnam relations. "This historic visit will undoubtedly take the already strong India-Vietnam relations to new heights."

Lam will leave for New Delhi later, meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and President Droupadi Murmu. This is Lam's first visit to India after becoming his country's president. —*PTI*

Mumbai cops to probe fake birth docs

MUMBAI, 5 MAY

The Mumbai Police have constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe cases involving alleged fake birth certificates obtained using forged documents in the city, officials said on Tuesday.

The city's civic authorities found that around 87,000 bogus birth certificates were allegedly issued between 2024 and 2026 by manipulating official records.

The Mumbai Crime Branch began investigating after receiving a large number of complaints suggesting similar fraudulent registrations.

Given the seriousness of the issue, Mumbai Police Commissioner Deven Bharti ordered constitution of the SIT for a thorough investigation into the complaints, the official said.

The SIT will be headed by the JCP (crime) and will include senior officers from the crime branch, special branch and detection units, he said.

BJP leader Kirit Somaiya had alleged that bogus birth certificates were being issued to illegal Bangladeshis and Rohingyas in parts of Maharashtra. — *PTI*

Power bank catches fire inside IndiGo plane

CHANDIGARH/ NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

All passengers and the crew aboard an IndiGo aircraft at the Chandigarh airport were evacuated on Tuesday after the power bank of a passenger caught fire, a source said.

In a statement, the airline said that an incident involving a customer's electronic equipment catching fire was reported when IndiGo flight 6E 108 from Hyderabad to Chandigarh which was parked after landing."An immediate evacuation was carried out. All passengers were safely moved to the terminal," the statement said.

The source said that soon after the aircraft landed, smoke came out from one of the overhead bins.The smoke was due to the power bank catching fire, the source said, adding that no one was injured seriously.A passenger said the incident took place as soon as the flight had landed.

The passenger said his wife, who was also on the flight, suffered a twisted ankle during the evacuation. He said she and other passengers were evacuated using sliders.

He said smoke started to come out from the power bank of a person on the last seat and the airhostess used a fire extinguisher to put it out. But there was a lot of smoke and passengers panicked, he said.

The airhostess tried to calm them but there was panic and emergency gates were opened for evacuation. Sliders were put up to help passengers come down, he said.

He said his wife was taken to a hospital in Zirakpur where doctors informed them that she had suffered multiple fractures and surgery would be required. — *PTI*

FORCED RETREAT

UP goes back to postpaid metres after protests

LUCKNOW, 5 MAY

The Uttar Pradesh government has decided to convert all prepaid smart metres into postpaid after widespread protests against prepaid power metres. Now there will be monthly billing with a 15-day payment window, officials said.

The decision came after directions from Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to simplify billing and ensure faster resolution of consumer grievances, Energy Minister AK Sharma said after a review meeting on Monday.

"The billing cycle will be like the earlier postpaid system. Consumers will receive monthly bills via SMS and WhatsApp and will be given adequate time to make payments," Shara said, adding that the move will benefit lakhs of consumers.

Under the revised system, electricity bills will be generated for consumption from the first to the last day of each month and will be delivered to consumers by the 10th. A payment window of 15 days from the date of billing will be provided, with the due date clearly mentioned as earlier.

Consumers who do not receive bills on time can access them through WhatsApp chatbots by sharing their connection number or by registering complaints on the 1912 portal. Consumers who have changed their mobile numbers can update them, officials said.

Consumers will be allowed to clear dues till 30 April in up to 10 instalments. Special camps will be organised in May and June for resolution of smart metre-related billing complaints. He said in cases where security deposits had been refunded after shifting to prepaid metres, the amount will now be recovered in four instalments. — *PTI*

Women protest against the installation of prepaid power metres in Uttar Pradesh saying that it will increase their expenses—*SCREENGRAB*

Ceasefire intact, says US; Iran cries violation

UAE reports drones for second straight day

WASHINGTON, 5 MAY

The US said on Tuesday that the ceasefire with Iran was still in place a day after Tehran was blamed for new attacks in the Strait of Hormuz and against the United Arab Emirates.

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth and Gen. Dan Caine, the US military's top officer, said at a news conference on Tuesday that Iran's renewed aggression hadn't reached the threshold of what Caine called "major combat operations." He said Tuesday marked a "quieter" day in the Strait.

"No, the ceasefire is not over," Hegseth said, affirming Caine's assessment.

However, they spoke before the latest attacks on the UAE. The UAE, a key American ally, said it came under attack by Iranian missiles and drones for a second straight day on Tuesday. At least three people were wounded in attacks the day before, and a drone sparked a fire at a key oil facility in the eastern emirate of Fujairah.

On the other hand, Iran says that the US' 'Project Freedom', where Washington aims to guide tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, does violate the ceasefire.

Iran's effective closure of the Strait, through nearly a fifth of the world's oil flowed before US and Israel launched the war on 28 February, has sent fuel prices skyrocketing and ramped up pressure on US President Donald Trump.

"We know full well that the continuation of the status quo is intolerable for America; while we have not even begun yet," Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf stated on X. His statement did not mention negotiations with the US that are now in the form of passing messages via Pakistan.

The US said it guided two tankers through the Strait on Monday. However, shippers remains warry of traversing the Strait. "At this point in time our risk assessment remains unchanged," Hamburg, Germany-based shipping company Hapag-Lloyd AG said in a statement. "Transits through the Strait are not possible for our ships."

MORE DESTRUCTION IN LEBANON

Israel's influential Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said he promised his son there would be 'more destruction' in Lebanon, as Israel continues bombarding the south. Lebanon's National News Agency reported massive shelling in various districts of southern Lebanon and said that Israel used prohibited phosphorus shells, a chemical weapon that burns skin. *—Agencies*

US KILLED 5 CIVILIANS IN HORMUZ: IRAN

TEHRAN, 5 MAY

Iranian state media claimed that the US fired upon two cargo ships in the Strait of Hormuz on Monday and killed five civilians.

The report by Tansim News Agency dismissed the US' claims that the two "small boats" were affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and instead said that the five people killed were civilians, citing military sources.

According to the US Central Command, which is overseeing military activity in the area, Sea Hawk and Apache attack helicopters "were used to eliminate Iranian small boats threatening commercial shipping".

The strike took place as part of broader US efforts directed at the "reopen the Strait" mission to ensure the unhindered flow of international trade.

There has been no official comment from either side, and Salar could not verify the veracity of the report. *—Agencies*

Security shoot at gunman near White House

WASHINGTON, 5 MAY

The US Secret Service reported it returned fire at a gunman near the White House, wounding him and causing a brief lockdown. The Washington DC Metropolitan Police have been investigating the incident since Monday.

This follows an alleged assassination attempt on President Donald Trump at the White House correspondents' dinner last month. Secret Service Deputy Director Matthew Quinn said agents identified a "suspicious individual" believed to carry a firearm, followed him, and called backup. When uniformed officers arrived, the suspect tried to flee and opened fire. Agents shot back, injuring the man, who was hospitalised. A child was also shot but was not seriously hurt; investigators believe he was hit by the suspect. *—Agencies*

Pak aids crew of Indian ship in Arabian Sea

The Pakistan Navy provided humanitarian assistance to the crew of an Indian offshore tug and supply vessel stranded in the Arabian Sea. The crew, which included six Indians and one Indonesian national, had reported a technical fault on the MV Gautam, which was en route from Oman to India, following which the Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre in Mumbai, Dawn reported, quoting officials. Emergency support, including food, medical aid and technical support, was provided to the stranded crew, while efforts to assist the vessel were continuing, it said.

— CFR

Boko Harram militants kill 23 soldiers in Chad

N'DJAMENA, 5 MAY

Boko Haram militants have killed 23 soldiers in an attack on a military post in the Lake Chad region, Chad's armed forces say. The Lake Chad region has long been threatened by the Nigeria-based Boko Haram militant group, which is known for carrying out attacks in neighbouring countries. The attack occurred Monday night on Barka Tolorom island. Chad's military said another 26 soldiers were injured. The army said "a significant number" of the attackers were killed and the group was repelled. "We will continue the fight with renewed determination until this threat is completely eradicated," Chadian President Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno said on Facebook, offering his condolences to the bereaved families. *—AGENCIES*

Sudan accuses Ethiopia, UAE of drone strikes

CAIRO, 5 MAY

The Sudanese government accused Ethiopia of being behind recent drone attacks on sites, including the Khartoum airport, and recalled its ambassador on Tuesday. Sudan also accused the United Arab Emirates of supplying drones to the militant Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The battles have now shifted towards more drone warfare, concentrating in the Kordofan and Blue Nile states. In fact, Army spokesman Brig Gen Asim Awad Abdelwahab said a press conference that the SAF had evidence that a drone that entered Sudanese airspace heading for El-Obeid in Kordofan state on 17 March originated from the UAE and took off from Ethiopia. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and paramilitary RSF have been locked in a gruelling civil war since 2023. *—PTI*

Bangladesh's Foreign Minister to visit China

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

China's Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, announced that Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman will visit China from 5 to 7 May, following an invitation from Wang Yi, China's Foreign Minister. Xu highlighted the importance of bilateral ties, emphasising China's desire to enhance political trust and deepen cooperation with Bangladesh. The visit aims to promote Belt and Road initiative projects and strengthen the China-Bangladesh strategic partnership. Beijing reaffirmed its commitment to friendly relations, noting that relations have developed steadily over more than 50 years based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. *—ANI*

— INSTAGRAM

Lively, Baldoni settle harassment lawsuit

NEW YORK, 5 MAY

Actors Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni have settled their legal dispute over the 2024 film 'It Ends With Us,' avoiding a trial. The actors, once embroiled in accusations of harassment and defamation, issued a joint statement expressing their shared goal of supporting survivors of domestic violence. The terms of the settlement were not disclosed. Lively had sued Baldoni, claiming he conspired to damage her reputation after she accused him of sexual harassment on set; Baldoni countered with claims of defamation and extortion. A judge previously dismissed some claims. *—PTI*

26 KILLED, 61 INJURED IN BLAST AT FIREWORKS FACTORY IN CHINA

Rescuers work at a site after an explosion at a fireworks plant in Guandu Town of Liuyang, central China's Hunan Province, on Tuesday *—PTI*

BEIJING, 5 MAY

At least 26 people were killed and 61 others injured in a massive explosion at a fireworks factory in China's Hunan province, officials said on Tuesday.

The explosion occurred on Monday afternoon at the plant operated by the Huasheng fireworks manufacturing and display company in Liuyang. The person in charge of the firm has been detained.

Videos on Chinese social media showed massive destruction of property spanning several kilometres.

More than 480 rescuers, have been deployed for relief operations, with three rescue robots pressed into service.

The injured have been rushed to hospitals for treatment. A second round of search operations is underway. Because the site was located near two black powder warehouses, rescuers have also evacuated nearby residents and set up a buffer zone to prevent a secondary accident. China is a leading manufacturer and exporter of fireworks. *—PTI*

Russia announces 2-day truce, then kills 5 in Ukraine

KYIV, 5 MAY

Emergency services personnel extinguish a fire on a vehicle following a Russian drone attack in Kyiv region, Ukraine, on Tuesday *—PTI*

Russian drone and missile strikes killed at least five people and wounded 39 others in Ukraine, authorities said, hours after Moscow a unilateral truce over two days later this week. Ukraine countered Russia's initial proposal with its own truce plan.

Ukrainian authorities said that Russian strikes were targeted at its power grid, and included 11 Iskander-M ballistic missiles and 164 strike drones.

Russia announced a unilateral truce on Friday and Saturday to mark the 81st Victory Day anniversary – when the Soviets defeated Nazi Germany in World War II. The Russian Defence Ministry said that it would strike back at Ukraine if it tries to disrupt the festivities on Victory Day, which Russia marks annually on 9 May. Notably, this is the first time that Russia is holding a military parade without heavy armoured vehicles.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy replied that Ukraine would observe a truce beginning at 12am on Wednesday and would respond in kind to Russia's actions from that moment on. He didn't put an end date on the truce.

"Russia could cease fire at any moment, and this would stop the war," Zelenskyy stated on X. *—PTI*

Vivek looks to end primary, prepare for Ohio Guv campaign

COLUMBUS, 5 MAY

Vivek Ramaswamy, a former GOP presidential candidate, aims to shift focus from primary battles to a costly campaign for Ohio governor. He faces Democrat Dr Amy Acton, a pandemic hero turned political rival. Ramaswamy, endorsed by the Ohio GOP, swept onto the scene early last year amidst political upheaval, with the backing of Donald Trump.

Acton, unopposed in the Democratic primary, gained fame during Covid-19 and became a target for pandemic restrictions. Her campaign faces challenges from engineer Casey Putsch, who has attacked her on heritage and policies. The governor's race is key, with all statewide offices open due to term limits.

In the Senate race, Husted is unopposed in the GOP primary, with Democrat Sherrod Brown as the likely opponent. Early voting started 7 April, with no reported issues. The primaries feature intense battles, notably in Toledo's 9th District and Cincinnati's district, amid ongoing redistricting efforts. *—PTI*

Heatwave kills 10 in Karachi as it simmers at 44 °C

KARACHI/ISLAMABAD, 5 MAY

At least 10 people have died in Karachi because of an intense heatwave that has affected Pakistan's Sindh province and has taken temperature to record highs.

Five bodies were recovered from various locations across Karachi city on Monday, while five people with symptoms of heatstroke died during treatment at hospitals, said Faisal Edhi of Edhi Welfare Trust, which operates a nationwide network of medical facilities and shelter homes.

Karachi recorded its hottest day since 2018 on Monday, as the temperature in the city surged past 44°C, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah urged the citizens to leave their homes only if it is unavoidable.

Amidst the deteriorating environmental crisis, the country's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has enforced extensive emergency measures as soaring temperatures exacerbate the plight of millions in Pakistan, the newspaper Dawn reported.

NDMA Early Warning Team has ruled out any respite from 'above normal' daytime temperatures through May and June.

Karachi has recorded its highest temperature of the year at over 44 degrees Celsius. Residents in the financial hub are battling extreme heat alongside severe water shortages caused by damaged infrastructure and aggressive power cuts. *—PTI*

CROSS-BORDER ATTACKS BY PAK KILLED 3: AFGHANISTAN

KABUL, 5 MAY

Afghanistan has accused Pakistan of carrying out cross-border attacks into its territory on Monday that hit civilian areas, killing at least three people and wounding 14.

Afghan Deputy government spokesman Hamdullah Fitrat said on X that the attacks also destroyed two schools, two mosques and a health centre in the eastern Afghan province of Kunar.

Pakistan's Information Ministry rejected the allegation on X, saying that Fitrat's accusations follow recent cross-border firing from Afghan territory into Pakistan. Those attacks, in March and April, killed nine women and children in the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. It added that images circulated with the Afghan claim show damage "inconsistent with artillery impact".

Pakistan and Afghanistan had been embroiled in months of deadly fighting since late February. *—PTI*

Pakistan resumes alcoholic exports after 5 decades

Pakistan's only locally-owned brewery has started exporting alcohol - a product that remains banned for the country's majority Muslim population for nearly five decades now. Murree Brewery has started exporting its beers and other alcoholic spirits to countries such as the UK, Japan, Portugal and Thailand in April.

Second hantavirus case confirmed on Atlantic Cruise ship

CAPE VERDE, 5 MAY

Two confirmed hantavirus cases have emerged aboard the MV Hondius, following three deaths and a serious illness. The Dutch woman tested positive and later died; a British passenger, evacuated to South Africa, is critically ill. A 69-year-old British man remains in intensive care in Johannesburg. Two crew members—one British, one Dutch—and a close contact of the German victim are to be evacuated.

The ship, currently anchored off Africa's west coast, was due to dock in Cape Verde but authorities have barred disembarkation for safety. Oceanwide Expeditions reports 149 passengers from 23 countries remain under strict precautions. Hantavirus is usually spread from rodents through faeces, saliva, or urine, causing severe respiratory illness, but human transmission is rare.

WHO is in talks with Spanish authorities about the ship's future, with plans for risk assessment and possible disembarkation at the Canary Islands. The WHO's top priority is the treatment of the two crew members with respiratory symptoms, to be evacuated to the Netherlands. *—Agencies*

THE HIGHEST HONOUR

War journalists, authors dominate Pulitzer 2026

One of Saher Alghorra's many images documenting the hunger in Gaza in 2025. This shows Gazans waiting at the Al-Mawasi camp for free meals ***PHOTO: PTI***

NEW YORK, 5 MAY

The 2026 Pulitzer Prize were announced on Monday, recognising journalists, authors, poets and others. Among key winners were Palestinian photographer Saher Alghorra, who painstakingly captured Israel's decimation of Gaza, author **Daniel Kraus** for his fiction 'Angel Down' and Associated Press journalists for documenting the role US tech firms played in government surveillance in China.

Alghorra, a New York Times photographer, was awarded the Pulitzer for photography for "his haunting, sensitive series showing the devastation and starvation in Gaza resulting from the war with Israel," the Pulitzer board said. One of Alghorra's pictures, published in July 2025, showed an emaciated boy being cradled by his mother, becoming a symbol of the hunger crisis in the Strip.

The Pulitzer board recognised AP journalists Dake Kang, Garance Burke, Byron Tau and Aniruddha Ghosal, along with contributor and independent journalist Yael Grauer, for "an astonishing global investigation into state-of-the-art tools of mass surveillance" that also included a story about the expansion of license plate surveillance of drivers in the US by the US Border Patrol. The investigative report spanned three years, and the agency won the international reporting prize.

The Washington Post bagged the Pulitzer for public service for reporting on the chaos of the Trump administration.

Kraus won the Pulitzer for fiction for his monumental 300-page World War 1 book that was written in just a single sentence. 'Liberation,' Bess Wohl's look back at the feminist consciousness-raising groups of the 1970s, received the drama prize, while Jill Lepore's 'We the People: A History of the U.S. Constitution' won for history, and Amanda Vaill's 'Pride and Pleasure: The Schuyler Sisters in an Age of Revolution' was the winner for biography. *—Agencies*

— PTI

Gold futures increase on spot demand

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Gold prices on Tuesday rose by Rs 254 to Rs 1,53,100 per 10 grams in futures trade as speculators created fresh positions on a firm spot demand. Closing bullion rates for Bengaluru on Tuesday showed 22-karat gold at Rs 14,080 per gram, while 24-karat gold was priced at Rs 15,360 per gram. Silver was quoted at Rs 2,54,400 per kilogram, reflecting prevailing market demand for the white metal.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, gold contracts for August delivery traded higher by Rs 254, or 0.17 per cent, at Rs 1,53,100 per 10 grams in a business turnover of 74 lots. Fresh positions built up by participants led to a rise in gold prices, analysts said.

Globally, gold futures rose 0.50 per cent to USD 4,544.62 per ounce in New York. —*PTI*

JLR cuts prices of imported models from UK by Rs 75L

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Jaguar Land Rover India on Tuesday announced price cuts of up to Rs 75 lakh on its UK-imported Range Rover completely built unit (CBU) models, anticipating benefits from the India–UK Free Trade Agreement set to take effect in April 2026.

The move covers flagship models such as the Range Rover SV and Range Rover Sport SV. The Range Rover SV has been repriced to Rs 3.5 crore from Rs 4.25 crore (ex-showroom), while the Range Rover Sport SV now starts at Rs 2.35 crore, down from Rs 2.75 crore.

The India–UK FTA, signed on 24 July 2025, provides for a phased reduction in import duties on UK-built CBUs. Duties on large-engine petrol and diesel cars will fall from 110 per cent to 30 per cent in the first year, tapering to 10 per cent by the fifth year, within a quota starting at 20,000 units and rising to 37,000 units.—*PTI*

Online bond platform providers may soon offer IFSCA products

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

India's Securities and Exchange Board of India has proposed expanding the scope of Online Bond Platform Providers (OBPPs) to include products regulated by the International Financial Services Centres Authority and select tax-saving bonds, in a move aimed at improving ease of doing business.

Currently, OBPPs can offer securities regulated by SEBI, the Reserve Bank of India, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India and Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority, but lack clarity on IFSCA-regulated instruments.

Under the proposal, OBPPs may also distribute 54EC bonds under the Income Tax Act, issued by entities such as Power Finance Corporation, Indian Railways Finance Corporation and REC Limited, which offer capital gains tax exemptions.

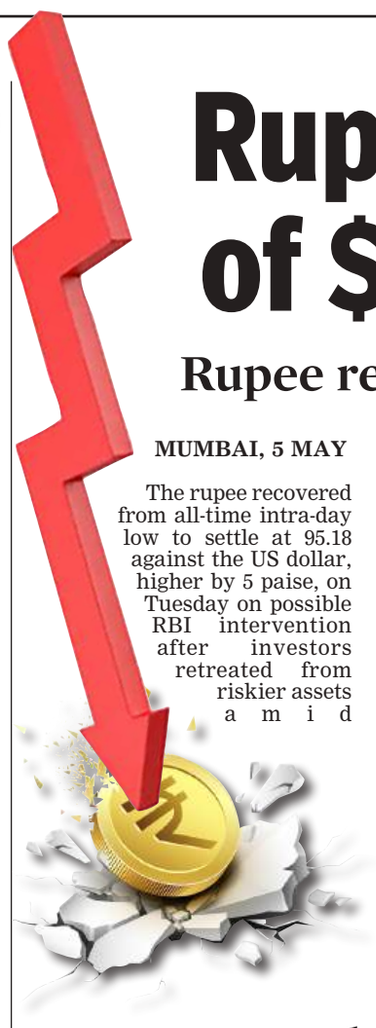
SEBI has mandated disclosures on issuer details, lock-in periods, investment limits and tax benefits, along with a clear disclaimer that investor grievances will lie with issuers, not the regulator.

It also proposed aligning OBPP compliance officer norms with stock broker regulations under the SEBI (Stock Brokers) Regulations, 2026, replacing the earlier company secretary requirement.

The changes follow industry representations, including from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, and aim to streamline regulatory frameworks. Public comments have been invited until 26 May. .—*PTI*

Rupee falls to new low of $95.25, then regains

Rupee recovered to settle at 95.18 against US dollar



MUMBAI, 5 MAY

The rupee recovered from all-time intra-day low to settle at 95.18 against the US dollar, higher by 5 paise, on Tuesday on possible RBI intervention after investors retreated from riskier assets amid renewed clashes in the Gulf and targeting of UAE infrastructure, which reignited supply chain fears.

Forex traders said Brent oil, hovering near USD 110 per barrel, is maintaining pressure on oil-importing economies like India. Moreover, factors such as unabated foreign capital outflows amid rising geopolitical uncertainties dented investor sentiments further.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.30 against the US dollar, then lost ground and touched an all-time low of 95.44 in intra-day trade. The rupee finally settled for the day at 95.18, registering a rise of 5 paise over its previous close.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on rising global crude oil prices as the Strait of Hormuz continues to remain closed. Dollar demand from importers and ongoing geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran may also pressure the rupee.

"However, RBI intervention may support the rupee at lower levels. USDINR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 95.10 to 95.55," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset ShareKhan.

- A falling rupee raises import costs for India, which relies heavily on overseas supplies. India imports over 85 per cent of crude oil

"The rupee's fresh all-time (intra-day) low... is a direct reflection of the unrelenting pressure from West Asia. Hormuz remains the single biggest factor governing oil and gas prices, and elevated crude is exerting a dual squeeze on the rupee," Anindya Banerjee, Head of Commodity and Currency Research, Kotak Securities, said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 98.47, up 0.10 per cent.

On the domestic equity market front, Sensex declined 251.61 points to settle at 77,017.79, while the Nifty fell 86.50 points to 24,032.80.

Foreign Institutional Investors sold equities worth Rs 3,621.58 crore on Tuesday. —*PTI*

Hormuz tensions drag markets lower

MUMBAI, 5 MAY

Benchmark indices BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty 50 ended lower on Tuesday as geopolitical tensions in the Strait of Hormuz region intensified and the US–Iran ceasefire showed signs of strain. A record low rupee against the US dollar and elevated crude oil prices further weighed on sentiment.

In a volatile session, the Sensex fell 251.61 points, or 0.33 per cent, to close at 77,017.79, after sliding as much as 754.37 points intra-day. The Nifty declined 86.50 points, or 0.36 per cent, to settle at 24,032.80.

Among Sensex constituents, ICICI Bank, Eternal, Tech Mahindra, Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel and Larsen & Toubro were the major laggards. Gains in Mahindra & Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finserv and Bajaj Finance limited losses.

In broader markets, the BSE MidCap Select index slipped 0.12 per cent, while the SmallCap Select index rose marginally by 0.14 per cent.

Sectorally, Realty fell 1.38 per cent, followed by declines in Top 10 Banks, Services, Consumer Durables, Private Banks and Bankex. However, gains were seen in Power, FMCG, Commodities, Healthcare, IT, Telecom, Utilities, Auto and Capital Goods segments.

Geopolitical concerns escalated after drone strikes triggered a fire at an oil facility in Fujairah, a key port in the United Arab Emirates, with Iran accused of involvement.

Foreign Institutional Investors turned net buyers on Monday, purchasing equities worth Rs 2,835.62 crore. The last session saw strong gains, with Sensex and Nifty rising over 0.4 per cent each. —*PTI*

Biocon's Shaw names successor

BENGALURU, 5 MAY

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw has chosen her niece, Claire Mazumdar, as successor to lead Biocon, outlining a phased leadership transition over the next five years.

Mazumdar-Shaw said she is not stepping down anytime soon, but plans a gradual handover, with Claire expected to move step by step from director to vice-chair and eventually chairperson. She added that the transition would ensure continuity while preserving the company's long-term vision.

Claire, 37, is the founding chief executive of Bicara Therapeutics, which was incubated with early backing from Mazumdar-Shaw and listed in 2024. She will continue in her current role during the transition. She has previously worked in business development and corporate strategy at Rheos Medicines and Third Rock Ventures, and holds a PhD in cancer biology from Stanford School of Medicine.

Claire, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw —*ANI*

Founded in 1978 in a Bengaluru garage, Biocon has grown into a global biosimilars leader, with a market capitalisation of Rs 585.21 billion, according to London Stock Exchange Group data.

It earns a significant share of revenue from the US and Europe and has developed over 30 biosimilars, including insulin, with 12 launched commercially.

Mazumdar-Shaw, who owns 29.92 per cent of the company, said she wants to retain the firm's legacy within the family as long as it holds a significant stake. —*Salar News*

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

India's coffee exports rose 26.6 per cent to 1.74 lakh tonnes during January–April 2026, driven by strong demand for robusta and instant coffee, according to Coffee Board of India data. Shipments stood at 1.37 lakh tonnes in the year-ago period.

Exports increased to Rs 936.57 crore from Rs 757.07 crore, while unit realisation improved to Rs 4,94,766 per tonne. Robusta exports surged 36 per cent to 85,168 tonnes, while instant coffee shipments rose to 20,332 tonnes. However, arabica exports declined by 58 per cent to 30,589 tonnes. India shipped 3.82 lakh tonnes in 2025.

Experts said record output, rising export values, higher imports for processing and steady domestic consumption indicate a turning point.

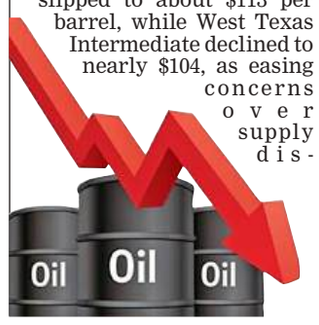
The Coffee Board projects record production of 4,03,000 tonnes for 2025–26, led by Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Arabica output may reach 1,18,000 tonnes, though climate risks remain a concern. —*PTI*

Crude oil futures fall amid war uncertainties

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Crude oil prices eased in futures trade on Tuesday, with contracts on the Multi Commodity Exchange falling Rs 143, or 1.42 per cent, to Rs 9,914 per barrel amid weak global cues and profit booking. Prices had surged up to 6 per cent in the last session.

Globally, Brent Crude slipped to about $113 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate declined to nearly $104, as easing concerns over supply disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz weighed on sentiment. Separately, Fitch Ratings warned that persistently high crude prices could strain Indian oil marketing companies' credit profiles if fuel price hikes lag rising input costs. Elevated prices may erode EBITDA, raise working capital needs and pressure cash flows.



Among firms, Indian Oil Corporation is seen as more resilient due to diversification, while Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited faces tighter headroom from expansion spending. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited may improve as projects conclude, though prolonged high prices could delay recovery.—*PTI*

'Indian firms pour in $16.4B, create 70,000 jobs across US'

WASHINGTON, 5 MAY

Indian foreign direct investment (FDI) in the United States stands at around USD 16.4 billion, supporting nearly 70,800 jobs, a senior US official has said, highlighting the growing economic footprint of Indian companies in America.

Speaking at a CII India reception on the sidelines of the SelectUSA Investment Summit at National Harbour in Maryland, Brandon Remington, Deputy Undersecretary (Policy and International Trade Administration), said Indian firms have also invested about USD 330 million in research and development in the US and generated exports worth USD 1.5 billion. He said the figures reflect cumulative available data and did not specify the period covered.

He added that Indian firms are increasingly contributing to US growth by supporting jobs, strengthening supply chains and investing.

A 2023 report by the Confederation of Indian Industry had estimated Indian investments in the US at USD 40 billion, creating over 4.25 lakh jobs, along with USD 1 billion in R&D spending and USD 195 million in CSR.

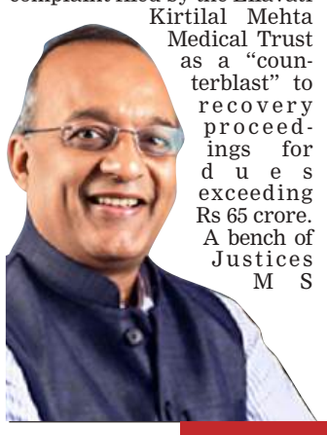
Namgya Khampa, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Indian Embassy, said Indian firms are playing a growing role in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, pharmaceuticals and energy, including in the Maryland–DC region.

Recent investments include Sun Pharmaceutical announcing a USD 12 billion acquisition of Organon & Co. Nearly a dozen Indian firms are expected to announce new investments. Texas, Georgia and New Jersey are the leading destinations. —*PTI*

HC BINS LILAVATI TRUST'S BRIBERY CASE AGAINST HDFC CEO

MUMBAI, 5 MAY

The Bombay High Court ruling in HDFC Bank bribery case on Tuesday quashed a bribery FIR against Sashidhar Jagdishan, describing the complaint filed by the Lilavati Kirtilal Mehta Medical Trust as a "counterblast" to recovery proceedings for dues exceeding Rs 65 crore.



A bench of Justices M S Karnik and N R Borkar held that financial institutions are duty-bound to pursue loan recovery and observed that the case stemmed from "distrust and strained relations" between past and present trustees of the Trust, which runs Lilavati Hospital in Bandra.

- The case arose from HDFC's recovery action against Splendour Gems, linked to the Mehta family, over dues of Rs 65.22 crore.

The court rejected allegations that pressure from the bank led to the 2024 death of Trust founder Kishore Mehta, stating bank officials could not be held responsible. It further said continuing the FIR would amount to an "abuse of the process of court" and lacked bona fides.

The case arose from HDFC Bank's recovery action against Splendour Gems Ltd, linked to the Mehta family, over dues of Rs 65.22 crore. The Trust alleged a diary found during recovery proceedings indicated payments of Rs 2.05 crore to Jagdishan on directions of Chetan Mehta, leading to accusations of bribery and cheating under IPC sections 406, 409 and 420.

The FIR was registered in May 2025 following a magistrate's order. Jagdishan argued the case was retaliatory and linked to ongoing recovery proceedings before the Debt Recovery Tribunal, where substantial dues remain unpaid. —*PTI*

DIGITISATION, HEALTH IN FOCUS

India, Jamaica boost trade ties, focus on skilled mobility

KINGSTON, 5 MAY

India and Jamaica have agreed to deepen trade ties and explore cooperation in the recruitment and mobility of skilled professionals, including healthcare workers and teachers, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said after talks with his Jamaican counterpart Kamina J Smith.

Both sides agreed on MoUs in digital transformation, cultural exchange, sports and digital payments. India recognised Jamaica's role as a logistics hub and gateway to the Caribbean.

The two explored tie-up in defence, healthcare, agriculture, education, digitisation and infrastructure. India-funded Improving Rural Livelihoods Project was recently completed in Kitson Town at $1 million under India-UN development fund, helping over 200.

India is examining an artisan hub and has extended support after Hurricane Melissa, supplying relief material.

Jamaica backed India's UNSC bid for 2028–29. India also announced a contribution towards India Heritage Day, marking 181 years of Indian arrival.

With a diaspora of about 70,000, Jamaica remains a key cultural partner. Jaishankar is on a Caribbean tour covering Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. —*PTI*

500M USERS, 68B CALLS

India ranks fifth in global spam call rankings: Truecaller

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

India ranked as the fifth most spam-hit country globally in 2025, with sales and telemarketing calls driving the bulk of unsolicited communication, according to a report by Truecaller.

The study, based on anonymised data from Truecaller's 500 million users, found over 68 billion spam and fraud calls worldwide last year—up 80 per cent from 37.8 billion in 2021. India recorded a spam intensity of 66 per cent, with sales and telemarketing accounting for 36 per cent of such calls, followed by financial services at 18 per cent and scams at 12 per cent.

Globally, Indonesia topped the list with 79 per cent spam intensity, driven largely by financial services outreach (42 per cent). Chile followed at 70 per cent, where debt collection dominated at 38 per cent. Vietnam and Brazil were tied at 68 per cent, led by telemarketing and telecom-related spam respectively.

Truecaller said its user base has expanded significantly, with over 150 million users now outside India as of March 2026. Spam intensity remains particularly high across Southeast Asia and South America, fuelled by automated diallers used for debt collection and financial pressure.

In Europe, telecom-related spam is rising, notably in the United Kingdom and Italy. The report warned that growing spam volumes are eroding trust in voice communication, with users increasingly ignoring unknown calls and risking missing important messages. —*PTI*

Andhra to get Rs 1,000 cr Carrier Global facility

AMARAVATI, 5 MAY

Carrier Global will invest Rs 1,000 crore to set up an advanced chiller manufacturing facility at Sri City in Tirupati district, with the Minister Nara Lokesh set to mark the project's groundbreaking on Wednesday.

The investment comes as Andhra Pradesh emerges as a key data centre destination. A major AI data centre hub by Google is planned in Visakhapatnam with 1 GW capacity, while Reliance Industries has proposed a 1.5 GW cluster. The state's pipeline exceeds Rs 6 lakh crore, targeting around 6 GW capacity, ahead of national levels.

Carrier's entry is expected to bolster the ecosystem by introducing advanced cooling technologies critical for AI infrastructure, high-performance computing and next-generation data centres. The state is building an integrated value chain spanning cooling systems, power and energy solutions, precision engineering and electronics.

Authorities aim to cut import dependence, boost exports and position India as a global data infrastructure manufacturing hub.

Sri City has emerged as a major HVAC and electronics cluster, attracting about Rs 12,000 crore in investments and generating around 25,000 direct jobs. A strong supplier base has added Rs 4,600 crore, with the region projected to account for nearly 60 per cent of India's AC production by 2027. —*PTI*

SUGARCANE FRP RAISED BY RS 10

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

The government on Tuesday raised the minimum price that sugar mills must pay to sugarcane growers by Rs 10 to Rs 365 per quintal for the 2026-27 season beginning October.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) for sugarcane.

The approved FRP is 2.81 per cent higher than the current 2025-26 season rate of Rs 355 per quintal. For every 0.1 per cent increase in recovery above 10.25 per cent, the FRP will rise by Rs 3.56 per quintal, incentivising higher sugar recovery by mills.

For farmers supplying cane to mills with recovery below 9.5 per cent, the government has decided that there will be no deduction in FRP. —*PTI*

—ANI

Thousands attend Alex Zanardi's funeral in Padua

PADUA, 5 MAY

Thousands of fans gathered for the funeral of Alex Zanardi, the Italian auto racing champion and Paralympic gold medallist, who died on Friday, last week aged 59. His hand-bike was placed near the altar inside a basilica, with his hand cycling teammates seated in front alongside his wife, Daniela, and son, Niccolò. Attendees included Stefano Domenicali, CEO of Formula One, skier Alberto Tomba, Paralympian Bebe Vio, and politicians. Zanardi was seriously injured in 2020 after a truck crash and had lost both legs nearly 20 years ago. Fans paid tribute, with one holding a sign saying, "Farewell Alex, your legend will never die." Zanardi won two CART titles, four Paralympic gold medals, competed in the New York Marathon, and set an Ironman record. —*PTI*

India's men finish top-three at Archery World Cup

SHANGHAI, 5 MAY

India's men's compound archery team secured a top-three finish in the qualification round at the Archery World Cup Stage 2. Former world champion Ojas Deotale, India's first male world champion, led with 711 points, finishing seventh overall. Sahil Jadhav scored 711 points, taking the next X-count spot, while Kushal Dalal finished 18th, helping India secure the third seed. Abhishek Verma scored 705 points, finishing 25th and missing the team cut but qualifying for individual rounds. India's women's team earned the fifth seed. Deotale and Swami will pair in the mixed team event, with qualification beginning Wednesday. —*PTI*

AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup: India lose 0-3 to Japan

SUZHOU, 5 MAY

India fought hard without conceding a goal in the first half against formidable Japan but eventually lost 0-3 in their second group match of the AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup here on Tuesday.After a goalless first half, Japan took the lead just before the hour mark through Yumi Hayashi (59th minute) and Yuzuha Ikeda (76th, 81st) then struck twice to hand the four-time champions their second win in Group B. The result took Japan to the top of Group B with six points from two matches. India remain without a point from their first two games, and are at the bottom of the group after Lebanon held Australia to a 1-1 draw earlier in the day. India now need to beat Lebanon in their last group match on Friday to have any chance of making it to the quarter-finals. The top two teams in each of the three groups and the two best third-placed teams qualify for the quarterfinals. Japan set the tempo from the opening whistle, using width through Mashiro Yamaji and Futaba Noda to deliver early crosses into the area. India responded with a compact defensive shape. Captain Abhista Basnett and Elizabed Lakra held the central line effectively in the opening phase Sustained pressure from Japan kept India inside their own half, with the entire unit working behind the ball. The Young Tigresses adjusted by crowding central areas, limiting space for the Japanese forwards. Nanami Kurita and Asuka Tanaka operated as a pair up front, combining in the final third, but India's defensive structure restricted clear openings for the Japanese. Thandamoni Baskey dropped deep to support the backline, often functioning as an additional defensive presence. Just before the hour mark, Hayashi found space inside the box and was picked out by Tanaka from the right. The former controlled and finished into the bottom corner to give Japan the lead.—PTI

Punjab Kings fight batting woes ahead of SRH face off

Hyd looks to bounce back after defeat and march to top

SRH spinner Amit kumar it to win it ft. —*X/SRH*

HYDERABAD, 5 MAY

Punjab Kings batters will be under pressure to halt a worrying slide when they face a confident Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League here on Wednesday.

Punjab, which had emerged as the team to beat with six wins on the trot, stumbled in the last two matches and both the defeats exposed frailties they would be keen to address swiftly.

Despite leading the standings with 13 points from nine games, the margin of error has narrowed considerably, with Royal Challengers Bengal uru, Sunrisers Hyderabad, Rajasthan Royals and Gujarat Titans all within touching distance, just a point behind.

Punjab's recent dip can largely be attributed to a loss of rhythm. Their explosive performances with the bat had covered up for an inconsistent bowling unit much of the season, but the cracks have now begun to show.

The top order, which set the tempo in the early phase, has faltered.

The reckless aggresion by trio of Priyansh, Prabhsimran and Cooper Connolly resulted in early setbacks, leaving the middle order with repair work.

The bowling unit, Punjab's weak link throughout the season, has offered little respite.

Third-placed Sunrisers, will be eager to bounce back from a seven-wicket defeat to Kolkata Knight Riders.

Punjab Kings player warm-up session before the start —*X/PBKS*

LSG VS RCB
@ Ekana Cricket Stadium
Match starts at
7.30 pm IST

Sunrisers Hyderabad: Pat Cummins (c), Salil Arora (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Travis Head, Ravichandran Ashwin, Aniket Verma, Abhishek Sharma, Harsh Dubey, Krains Fuletra, Liam Livingstone, Kamindu Mendis, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Harshal Patel, Shivam Mavi, Shivang Kumar, Amit Kumar, Gerald Coetzee, Praful Hinge, Sakib Hussain, Dilshan Madushanka, Eshan Malinga, Onkar Tarnale, Jaydev Unadkat, Zeeshan Ansari.

Punjab Kings: Shreyas Iyer (c), Priyansh Arya, Harnoor Singh, Prabhsimran Singh, Mitchell Owen, Nehal Wadhera, Azmatullah Omarzai, Marco Jansen, Musheer Khan, Shashank Singh, Marcus Stoinis, Suryansh Shedge, Arshdeep Singh, Xavier Bartlett, Yuzvendra Chahal, Lockie Ferguson, Harpreet Brar, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Yash Thakur, Cooper Connolly, Ben Dwarshuis, Praveen Dubey, Vishal Nishad, Pyla Avinash,

'A PART OF BROADER JOURNEY'

'Disappointed', says Somani-led group on losing RR bid

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Expressing disappointment after losing the Rajasthan Royals' ownership bid to industrialist Lakshmi N Mittal led group, the US-based Kal Somani–led consortium on Tuesday denied that it pulled out of the bidding process, asserting that the final outcome does not reflect a "level playing field".

Lakshmi Mittal and his son Aditya Mittal, along with vaccine manufacturer Adar Poonawalla, acquired a majority stake in Rajasthan Royals for USD 1.65 billion (Rs 15,600 crore approx) after the consortium comprising Somani (Tech Entrepreneur), Rob Walton (Walmart Group) and Sheila Ford Hamp (Ford group) pulled out of the race, according to the franchise.

"We are deeply disappointed not to be part of the Rajasthan Royals ownership group, following a long six-month process in which we were the lead bid from start to finish," the consortium stated in a press release.

"Contrary to stories that have been planted in the press, our group was and has always been fully funded, prepared to close with certainty, and never withdrew our bid," it added.

The Mittal family will own approximately 75 per cent of Rajasthan Royals, with Poonawalla holding around 18 per cent.

The remaining approximately 7 per cent will be held by approved existing investors, including Badale. The Somani-led consortium asserted that it was the strongest bidder throughout the process. "While this outcome is both surprising and disappointing, we view this experience as part of a broader journey," it further added. -PTI

- "We are deeply disappointed not to be part of the Rajasthan Royals ownership group, following a long six-month process in which we were the lead bid from start to finish," Somani led consortium stated in a press release.

Man City's draw lends PL boost to Arsenal

LIVERPOOL, 5 MAY

- City has four games left and needed a win to keep the pressure on Mikel Arteta's side. But although it dominated possession in the first half it struggled to create real chances

Jérémy Doku scored a last-gasp equaliser for Manchester City to snatch a 3-3 draw at Everton and throw the Premier League title momentum back to leader Arsenal. The draw ended a run of three consecutive wins for City and left it five points behind the London club.

City has a game in hand but the loss at Everton's Hill Dickinson Stadium meant the title was now Arsenal's to lose. The Gunners have three games to play. "It's painful now," Doku said. "There's a lot of games to go, everything can happen. We lost two points today but we will keep on fighting.

City has four games left and needed a win to keep the pressure on Mikel Arteta's side. But although it dominated possession in the first half it struggled to create real chances and it wasn't until the 42nd minute that Doku found space in a crowded penalty box to curl in a peach of a strike and break the deadlock.

A win for Everton, would have lifted it within two points of seventh but instead it was 10th, tied on points with Fulham and Chelsea.

"We let ourselves down, we defended the second goal so poorly and that was the main reason (for the draw)," coach David Moyes said. —*PTI*

Everton's Jake O'Brien scores during the Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Everton in Liverpool, England —*AP*

India retains top position in ICC T20I

DUBAI, 5 MAY

Three-time World Cup winners India retained the top spot in the ICC T20I rankings, on Tuesday, followed by England and Australia at second and third place respectively.

India had created history by becoming the first team to successfully defend their T20 World Cup title, and also win it for a record-extending third time in March, when they co-hosted the tournament with Sri Lanka. "The latest rankings rate all matches played since May 2025 at 100 per cent and those of the previous two years at 50 per cent," the ICC said on its website.

—BCCI

"Sitting at 275 points, India see their lead over England (262 points) trimmed by merely one point, while Australia are placed closer to England at the third place with 258 points," it added.

In all, there is no change in ranking for the top seven teams in the ICC T20I rankings with New Zealand (247), South Africa (244), Pakistan (240) and the West Indies (233) remaining at the following spots.

Sri Lanka (221) have lost six rating points and subsequently slipped to the ninth position while Bangladesh (225) have moved up one place to be at eighth. Afghanistan (220) are at 10th with a close margin of gap with Sri Lanka.

Zimbabwe and Ireland are ranked 11th and 12th respectively. —*PTI*

Missed doping test: Vinesh gets notice

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

Wrestler Vinesh Phogat has been notified by the International Testing Agency (ITA) for a missed out-of-competition doping test on 18 December, 2025, marking her first whereabouts failure in the last 12 months.

In a communication dated 4 May, 2026, the ITA said the missed test was recorded after reviewing her explanation submitted on 19 January, following an earlier notice issued on January 5 which had flagged the missed test and sought her response.

The agency clarified that the notice is not an anti-doping violation but a warning under whereabouts rules requiring athletes to remain available for no-notice testing at all times.

Under rules framed by United World Wrestling and the World Anti-Doping Agency, any combination of three missed tests and/or filing failures within a year can lead to a suspension of up to two years.

The ITA said a doping control officer could not locate Vinesh during her designated 60-minute testing window. Athletes in the Registered Testing Pool must specify a daily one-hour slot between 6 am and 11pm.

The agency noted she was attending the Haryana Assembly session and had travelled from Bengaluru to Chandigarh, and had recently welcomed a child, but ruled she failed to update her whereabouts in time.

It said she did not use available methods such as SMS, email or mobile application to revise her location before 18 December.

The International Testing Agency added she failed to update her filing as soon as possible despite the schedule change, concluding the failure would be recorded. —*PTI*

15-point format similar to 20 point: Chirag

NEW DELHI, 5 MAY

India's leading men's doubles shuttler Chirag Shetty on Tuesday said badminton's proposed 15-point scoring format would not fundamentally alter the sport but would place greater emphasis on speed and attacking play.

The Badminton World Federation recently approved the 15x3 system at its Annual General Meeting in Denmark, with implementation set for January 4, 2027, drawing mixed reactions from players across the international circuit and within India.

Recalling an earlier proposal to introduce an 11x5 format, Chirag said that change would have "completely changed the sport," whereas the 15-point system remains "sort of still similar" to the existing 21-point format in terms of structure and match flow.

He said shorter games could favour aggressive players, as sustaining power-based play over fewer rallies is easier. "Your body would be able to take it," he noted, adding rallies may become faster and more decisive from the outset.

However, India's senior singles player HS Prannoy said the 21-point system better balanced endurance, speed and power over longer matches.—*PTI*

ADVOCATING 'FAIR PAY'

Boycott Grand Slam if players aren't paid properly: Sabalenka

ROME, 5 MAY

Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka believes tennis players should organise a boycott if they don't start receiving a bigger share of tournament revenues at the Grand Slams.

Sabalenka and fellow No 1 Jannik Sinner were among leading players — most of them ranked in the top 10 — who issued a statement on Monday expressing "deep disappointment" over the French Open prize money.

"Without us there wouldn't be a tournament and there wouldn't be that entertainment. I feel like definitely we deserve to be paid more percentage," Sabalenka said on Tuesday at the Italian Open as she celebrated her 28th birthday. "I think at some point we will boycott it. I feel like that's going to be the only way to fight for our rights."

- French Open organisers last month increased overall prize money. But the players' statement said "the underlying figures tell a very different story," claiming they will receive a smaller share of tournament revenues.

The players are also seeking better representation, health options and pensions from the four Grand Slam tournaments: Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and US Open.

French Open organisers announced last month they were increasing overall prize money by about 10 per cent for an overall pot of 61.7 million euros ($72.1 million), with the total amount up 5.3 million euros from last year.

But the players' statement said "the underlying figures tell a very different story," claiming they will receive a smaller share of tournament revenues.

"Players' share of Roland Garros tournament revenue has declined from 15.5% in 2024 to 14.9 per cent projected in 2026," the players said.

Iga Swiatek, a four-time French Open champion, said it was important to have proper communication with governing bodies to have space to talk and maybe negotiate. Hopefully before Roland Garros there's going to be opportunity, she said. —*PTI*